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FROM

By exchange

THE MYSTERY OF JUNE 13TH

"IT IS A WEIRD AND GRUESOME SPECTACLE"

(Page 246)

THE MYSTERY OF JUNE 13TH

BY

MELVIN L. SEVERY

AUTHOR OF
"THE DARROW ENIGMA," ETC.

Illustrated By
THE KINNEYS

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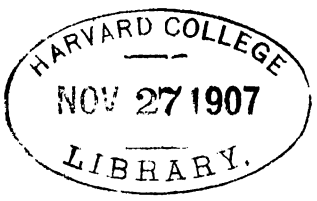

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FOREWORD

THE generous reception which the Press and Public gave "The Darrow Enigma" is responsible for the present story.

May it not be considered an ungracious return for the kind treatment I have received.

Lest a misapprehension spread still further, it is perhaps but fair to state here that I am not a student of detective literature; that I know little of the methods usually employed in such stories, and have not felt it necessary to follow that little.

I am even guilty of the heresy of believing that a "mystery story" may be written in the perusal of which the reader will find not merely pleasure, but a modicum of profit as well.

Should the present story justify this belief, in howsoever slight a degree, I shall be well pleased.

M. L. S.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, MASS., 1905.

CONTENTS

PAGE

EPISODE FIRST

THE PAKEHA 1

EPISODE SECOND

THE MARKED MAN 41

EPISODE THIRD

THE BLOW IN THE DARK 121

EPISODE FOURTH

THE CORPUS DELICTI 185

EPISODE FIFTH

THE FEAST OF THE LONG WHITE PIG 253

EPISODE SIXTH

THE MYSTERIOUS CRYPTOGRAM 329

EPISODE SEVENTH

RUN TO EARTH 409

GLOSSARY 567

ILLUSTRATIONS

"It is a weird and gruesome spectacle"	*Frontispiece*	
"'Stay, O Ariki!'"	*Facing page*	18
"'We will rest now for the day'"	"	" 44
"'Will you recognise me as the Eichberg proxy?'"	"	" 168
"'Down on thy knees and speak the truth before I blast thee!'"	"	" 310
"In an instant pandemonium reigns!"	"	" 546

EPISODE FIRST

The Pakeha

CHAPTER I

Where the great oak falls the clinging ivy goes down with it, and there is long a vacant space which only memory can fill.

In shape, New Zealand closely resembles the human leg below the knee, Cook Strait being a dislocation in the vicinity of the lower end of the tibia. The shore of what is now Hawke Bay occupies the place of the posterior ligament. From Cape Kidnappers to Mahia Peninsula the imagination easily stretches a *tendo Achillis*.

When the pakeha, or white man, first set his heel upon the heel of New Zealand, he found upon the shores of the present Hawke Bay a powerful Maori tribe known as the Mohakakas. In those days,—and it is not so very long ago either,—every Maori village was strongly fortified. Incessant tribal wars reduced offensive and defensive military tactics to an exact science.

The Maori who was taken prisoner by an enemy was always referred to by his family and friends as *dead*, and the disgrace followed his descendants ever after. Cannibalism was the rule, and the two worst taunts that could be applied to a foe took something like these forms: "Your great-aunt's cousin was taken prisoner by the Rarawa!" or "The Ngatiroa chewed the uncle of your father's grandfather!"

To such a people war was the great end of life, and e deeds of valour which mark Maori history in its every pter make the Homeric legends read like records phle botomised for nursery use.

Something like half a century ago an event occurred in the pah of the Mohakakas which is of present interest. This pah, or fortress, was nearly square and enclosed an area of about five acres. Its chief defence was a stockade some sixteen feet high, the timbers of which were joined, at a height of ten feet from the ground, by very long cross-pieces, the whole thing being securely lashed together with a rope made of *toro-toro*, a creeping plant exceedingly tough and well adapted to the purpose.

On the eventful thirteenth of June in question, the village of the Mohakakas presents a more than usually animated spectacle, for after several days of inclement weather has come at last a day so perfect that old and young alike are irresistibly wooed out into light and life.

In the bay, taking advantage of the flood-tide, the Moschetto fleet of canoes, fully one hundred in number, are fishing for the *kahawai*, which, though two or three times as large as the mackerel, resembles that fish both in appearance and in the fact that it is best taken by a moving bait.

The little flotilla upon the water, its component parts darting about like erratic shuttles, and the busy groups upon the beach lend an air of animation to the scene. Both sexes and all ages are well represented.

In the background groups of youths are practising the "three R's" of Maori education, running, wrestling and reed-throwing.

Standing near the landing-place from her companions is Tui, the f kaka maidens. She is *tapued*[1] to chief [illegible]i of the tribe. Tall, lit luxuriant silky hair falling in rip ground, and the dark, luminous ey

[1] See glossary.

trospective fire, Tui is a maiden of whom any chief may well be proud. Her features have the high cast and noble regularity of the Polynesian, with its Mosaic outlines unpolluted by the faintest trace of the Negroid Papuan, who, as the original possessor of the country, has, in far too many cases, avenged his conquest by lowering the physical standard of his conquerors. By no means the least of this maiden's charms is her wonderful voice, which has given to her the name of "The Tui," the bird which ushers in the morn.

Clad in a splendid *kaitaka* shawl, the staple of which is of the finest *ngaro* flax worked in a small diamond-shaped pattern, and the fringe of which is of the long, white hair of the dog, she seems, at a short distance, to be clothed in a loose mantle of silk, so worn as to leave her right arm and neck bare, and to expose, ever and anon, the delicately modelled charms of her figure.

She is leaning now against the stockade with a dreamy, far-away look in her eyes. Of what is she thinking? Upon what is youth and beauty wont to dwell when Love's spring freshets swirl about the heart? Mayhap her mind is busy with her bronze Apollo—her handsome lover, the head chief of her tribe, absent upon a short journey up the Mohaka river. Who can tell?—But stay! Now the glance changes, loses its broad, vague, ocean-like introspection, narrows into the straits of close observation, and focusses upon a man a few paces in front of her. This man shows unmistakable evidences of a mixture of the Papuan and the Polynesian. He has the broad, high forehead of the superior race, with the crisp, curly hair, projecting jaw, broad nose and constant smile of the inferior Nigritic race. His bearing is that of one high in authority, and his every movement marks him as a man of power and prestige, as the Maori would say, "Great is his *mana*."

An expression of mixed suspicion and scorn mars Tui's fine face as she watches this man's slightest action. He has paid her most distinguished and persistent attention up to the very day of her betrothal, yet, despite the fact that he could boast more riches, more wives, and a greater *mana* than any other member of the tribe, her heart did not soften toward him. She is to-day, if possible, more suspicious of him than ever before. She sees him glance furtively about him; notes the movement of his lips as he repeats something to himself which she cannot make out; and observes him pause under a tree, reach both arms upward and grasp a twig in each hand. She detects the peculiar little jerk of the wrist with which he detaches the tender shoots, and even notices that the twig in his left hand—the sinister hand!—is the longer of the two. Nor does the fact escape her that Oraka, the *tohunga*,[2] is pleased with this evil omen.

For a long time a vague, nebulous suspicion has been slowly gaining form just below the surface of Tui's consciousness. It is not yet substantial enough for her to seize, nor definite enough for her fully to comprehend it, still she feels it hourly gaining solidity and assuming sharpness of outline. She is debating the propriety of confiding her fears to her lover at their next meeting, when a low wail, like to the sound of distant lamentation, falls upon her ear. The *tohunga* hears it too, and a fierce light is in his eyes as he hurries away in the direction from which the sound proceeds.

Deep in her heart of hearts Tui knows, yet knows not how she knows—that the worst has happened. Bad news has a telepathy all its own. The poor, trembling, fear-bitten maiden has not long to wait for the confirmation of her gravest doubts.

[2] See glossary.

Two men are already to be seen in the distance bringing into the village a *kaw-shore*. Upon this is a recumbent form which Tui instinctively feels to be that of her young lover, the Ariki—and she is right.

The mournful procession, its ranks now swollen by all those who were working outside the pah, enters the stockade and advances to the centre of the enclosure. Here the men put down the *kaw-shore*. The grief-stricken people press close about the prostrate chief, but the *tohunga* imperiously orders them to fall back. Those in front, and Tui is among the foremost, see Oraka remove the bandage from the young Ariki's head and note the wound near his left temple from which the blood pours in a thin stream. The *tohunga* takes a little flask from beneath his *pureki* and catches a few drops of the crimson fluid. Before the compress can be readjusted the eyes of the wounded man roll upward and he appears to be dying. The *tohunga* hastily seizes him by the shoulder and shakes him rudely, as he shouts in his ear:

"*Kia kotahi ki te ao! Kia kotahi ki te ao! Kia kotahi ki te po!*"

With a convulsive effort the prostrate chief springs to his feet and brandishes his spear.

"Charge, Tara! Charge, Karaka!" he cries, imagining himself again upon the battlefield. "At them again! Ye are no boys in whom the sap of life is still rising that ye shall drop of fatigue after the first blow! Well done, Karaka! Thou art a good man (*tino tangata*)!"

For a moment the trusty spear cut the air into flashes of jade-green light, followed by a lightning-like thrust.

"*Ki au te mataika!*" cries the young chief in the exultation of delirium, holding aloft the imaginary head

of his enemy. For a brief space he remains silent, as if his effort and the loss of blood had quite overcome him.

The *tohunga* utilises this pause to say:

"O thou, the Elder Father (*Te Kan Matua*), go not to *Te Reigna* till thou hast told us thy slayer's name, that Karaka, thy brother, may take full payment (*utu*)! Speak, O Ariki! and ere the fall of the leaf he shall bake thy murderer's head and swallow his eyes, even as Hongi Ika did those of Te Tihi at Hokianga. Canst thou not speak, O Elder Father?"

Thus besought, Te Wira, Ariki of the Mohakakas, checks the incoherent mutterings into which he has relapsed, and makes a vain effort to comprehend the question. For a moment he seems striving to recall some experience, then he taps his head gently with his left forefinger and says faintly:

"*No hea.* The thought is with you. I cannot say.—Tui, my Bird, where is she?"

The weeping maiden steps forth from among the sorrowing women, but Death drops his black curtain of delirium between the young chief and his betrothed! The dying man has had his last rational moment. Again,—the ruling passion still strong in death,—he is upon the battlefield cutting down all before him. Now, raising his spear for a mighty thrust, he hurls it far into the assembled multitude, shouting, as his eyes blaze with their last feverish fire:

"*Na! Na! mate rawa!*" and then plunging headlong upon the ground.

The *tohunga* quickly bends over him and cries aloud close to his ear, as he roughly shakes him:

"*Kia kotahi ki te ao! Kia kotahi ki te po!*"

No response rewards his efforts. The bronze Apollo is dead.

"He has gone to *Te Reigna* on the wings of the upper air," says the *tohunga* solemnly.

At this sad announcement a great cry of lamentation arises from the assembled tribe. Again and again the prolonged notes of anguish fill the air. Then, as if by common consent, many of the young women, led by Tui, come forward, cut off their hair, and strew it about the body of their beloved chief.

The older women now range themselves in a long line before the dead, screaming, wailing and quivering their hands about in the most extraordinary manner while cutting themselves severely with sharp flints and shells. In the centre of the line Te Alis Ora, mother of the deceased, presents a most ghastly spectacle. She is singing a dirge-like wail, and is literally covered with blood. —But listen! They are beginning to sing the *tangi*. The low, monotonous chant of many voices in mournful cadence rolls like a retiring wave far out to sea. When it is finished a breathless silence reigns, broken only by the half-suppressed sobs of the women. This, in its turn, is followed by a low murmur of mixed fear and horror as the dense human mass parts in the middle as if a gigantic wedge had been driven into its centre. At the farther end of the avenue thus made appears the undertaker of the tribe. He is clad from head to foot in red and *tapued* an inch thick, for his handling of the dead renders him so unclean a thing that he is shunned as if he were a leper.

Straight down the ever-widening gap shambles the man of red. Before he reaches the dead the people are already dispersing. They will gather again in a short time when the body of the young chieftain sits in state.

. . . . .

In the dense growth by the Mohaka river sit two young

women, sisters of the dead Ariki, spinning a cord wherewith to strangle themselves. The flax is wet with their tears, and their sighs mingle with, and are lost in, the plaint of the river as it rushes on to drown its troubles in the unknown sea, even as they are hurrying down the torrent of their grief to the uncharted ocean of the great beyond. Their task finished, they conceal the cord and return to the pah to pay their last respects to the dead. They are just in time to join in the singing of the *pihe*, or funeral chant, which is sung standing before the dead.

As the last sad wail dies upon the air Te Ara, the best spearman of the tribe, begins his speech in praise of the dead, bounding all the while to and fro before the corpse with his famous spear in hand.

"Farewell, Te Wira! Go, taking with thee thy kindness and hospitality, thy generosity and valour, and leave none behind who can fill thy place! We strove to hold thee to us, but who can bind a flowing river? Farewell, O Elder Father! Our hearts roll about in the hollows of our breasts. We are filled with *aroha* for thee. Last night the moon was eaten into by a star, yet the thought of its meaning was not with us. Thou wert a great *toa*, and great was thy *mana* and great the *mana* of thy spear. When the battle raged neither didst thou remember the light of this world, nor take thought of life. Woe! Woe! that thou shouldst be killed in time of peace! Great are the salt tears, and greater shall be the tears of blood shed in vengeance (*utu*), because thy taking off was a *kohoru*. Short was thy life, but so it is with heroes.—Farewell, O Ariki! Farewell!"

And now follow other orations by the leading *rangatiras* of the tribe. Karaka, the eldest of the dead chief's three brothers, is the last to speak, and his words are few as befits the occasion.

Thrice he bounds by the corpse before he utters a syllable, and his countenance is fearful to look upon. At length he controls his emotion sufficiently to speak.

"Farewell, O my brother! Many are the times we have fought together by the light of our enemies' eyes. The thought is still with me that it was but last bird-moon thou savedst me from the death of capture. Farewell, O Ariki! One wing of the Mohakakas is broken and hangs dangling on the ground. Black is the cloud above us and full are the skies of tears. The waves, booming like the little big-guns of the pakeha sea-birds, shall be thy powder of pain (*paura mamae*)! No fair fight killed thee, O my brother!—Friends, warriors, the best lamentation for a *toa* is a blow struck against his enemy. To-night Oraka calls up the spirit of the dead. We shall then learn the murderer's name and then—no Mohakaka *rangatira* ever forgets an injury! I will repay, be sure, cost what it may in effort or in years! Till to-night, then, farewell, O Te Wira, my beloved brother, farewell!"

. . . . .

It is night. In the common house of the pah are assembled the tribe's *rangatiras* and the relatives of the dead Ariki. Even his two baby brothers, aged respectively two and four years, are there in the shadow, close by Karaka, now the head of the family. James Eldredge Moreton, the Mohakaka pakeha, who has just returned to the village, is there also. The small fire of *puriri*-wood, a fuel which burns like charcoal, casts an uncertain flicker about the apartment. The priest is lying in the darkest corner upon the rushes with which the floor is strewn.

The first watch of the night has been passed in anxious expectation, yet nothing has occurred to break

the silence, save the sobs of the women and the sighs of the men. The fire is now but a handful of glowing coals and the room is almost in total darkness. Overcome by fatigue, many have stretched themselves upon the rushes near the fire and not a few are asleep. The *tohunga* in the corner is snoring. Tui's sobs are interspersed with moans that are not good for one to hear——

"Did you hear that?"

The awe-aspirated question is asked simultaneously by half-a-dozen of the more wakeful watchers, and he who is nearest the *tohunga* seizes his foot and arouses him.

The noise increases till it sounds as if someone were forcing his way through the rushes into the house.

And now a vague, mysterious voice, a sort of weird, hollow whistle rendered articulate and sounding like the wind blowing into a conch-shell, proceeds from the roof of the building near its back wall.

"Salutation! Salutation to you all! Salutation! Salutation to you, my tribe! Family, I salute you! Friends, I salute you! Beloved, my Bird, I salute you!"

The effect is magical. A cry of affection and despair, such as lives ever in the inner ear, escapes the weeping Tui as she springs to her feet and, with arms wildly extended, rushes toward the thicker gloom pervading the back of the apartment. Instantly her two brothers seize her by the waist and hold her fast.

"Is it you? Is it you? Truly, is it you?" she cries. "*Aue! Aue!* They hold me! Wonder not that I have not followed you. They restrain me; they watch me; but I go to you! The sun shall not rise, the sun shall not rise! *Aue! Aue!*" and she falls insensible upon the rush floor.

Again the spirit-voice, and this time the words proceed from the ground beneath the dying embers:

"Speak to me, the tribe! Speak to me, the family! Speak to me [a long pause] the pakeha!"

"How is it with you? Is it well with you in *that* country?" asks Karaka, the brother.

"It is well with me. My place is a good place," replies the spirit.

During this awe-inspiring dialogue Tui, who is near the door, succeeds in leaving the apartment unobserved.

"Have you seen our father and our sister?" continues Karaka.

"Yes, I have seen."

"Tell them my love is great toward them and will never end."

"Yes, I will tell."

"Have you seen Hauraki and Te Tao and Tara?"

"Yes, they are all with me. Speak out the thoughts that be with you. You have something else to ask."

"Yes, so it is!" exclaims Karaka fiercely. "We would know who murdered thee."

"Farewell, O tribe!" cries the spirit from high in the air.

"Stay!" shouts Karaka. "Tell us who killed thee!"

"*Ask the pakeha!*" replies the spirit from deep beneath the ground. "Farewell, my family, I go! When my blood is poured out I will come again. Farewell!" and then high in the air, "Farewell!" and again all but lost in the distance, "Farewell!"

"Farewell! Farewell, O Elder Father! Farewell, O 'Ariki! Farewell, O my brother!" comes in awe-stricken chorus from the assembly. For a moment there is a dead silence, and then Karaka exclaims:

"The pakeha! The pakeha! *We'll ask the pakeha!*"

But the pakeha is not there, yet no one saw him leave, so rapt was the attention!

As Karaka and his warriors rush forth to find More-

ton the report of a musket rends the darkness, and in at the now open doorway streams a lurid light.

"Fire! Fire!"

The cry seems only to add to the commotion. Men hastily arm themselves, while women, doubly stricken with panic, run aimlessly to and fro. The flames which consume the burning house illumine the building next to it, and exhibit a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle. In the veranda of the house an old man is kneeling upon one knee, while upon the other he supports the dead body of a young girl, his daughter. His right arm is under her neck and the lower part of his long, grey beard is dabbled with blood. His left hand is twisting his matted hair, as he howls in the impotency of a grief and despair which know no hope. The delicate body of the girl is bare from the waist up and besmeared with blood.

She has fired the house for light, as well as to distract the attention of any who may be watching her, secured a musket, tied to its trigger a loop into which to insert her foot, placed the muzzle to her aching heart and blown herself to—to her lover!

"She has followed her *rangatira*," says the *tohunga* in a low, tender voice ill matching the light in his eyes.

Indeed, Tui, thou saidst truly; for thee "the sun shall not rise, the sun shall not rise!"

. . . . .

In the meantime the pakeha has left the village well behind him. Long intercourse with Maoris has taught him something of their methods.

. . . . .

It is the night of the fourteenth of June, the day after the murder of the young Mohakaka chieftain. A small fire of *puriri*-wood glows feebly in the forest beneath

the hollow *rata* tree, in which repose the remains of the dead Ariki. Its dying embers, fanned by a gentle breeze, faintly illumine a small circle in the forest and make the engulfing darkness outside blacker and more intense. On the side of the fire nearest the trunk of the burial-tree stands the young priest, Oraka, while opposite him, with their eyes riveted upon him, are grouped an even dozen of his fellow-tribesmen, among them Karaka, the dead Ariki's eldest brother.

In his right hand the *tohunga* holds aloft a little flask, while in his left is a small chalice. He drops a single drop of the crimson fluid from the flask into the little cup as he chants in a low, monotonous voice:

"Behold, O Spirit of Te Wira, I pour forth thy blood!"

"Speak to us, O Elder Father (*Te Kan Matua*)!" murmur the twelve men on the other side of the fire.

"To each man here a drop of thy sacred life to consecrate him to everlasting vengeance. The first was mine, O Ariki!" and Oraka counts the drops as they fall.

"Two; Tomo!"

The Maori whose name is called raises aloft both hands with the fingers widely spread and the palms toward the *tohunga*.

"Every drop of my blood, O Elder Father!" he cries aloud, "shall avenge this drop of thine!"

"Three; Te Maire!" calls the *tohunga* as he drops the third drop into the chalice which he holds aloft.

Te Maire repeats Tomo's gesture as he says impressively:

"As that drop is to the sea, O Ariki, so shall be all other things but vengeance in my heart!"

"Four; Teu Kau!" and another drop falls into the priest's cup.

"As moulten metal shall that drop be in my soul, O

Te Wira, till I have cooled it with a requiting flood!" cries Teu Kau with upraised arms.

"Five; Ruia!"

"My heart and all the crimson in it, O beloved chief, is slave to that one ruby jewel of thine!"

"Six; Panapa!"

"That drop hath coloured my ambition red, O Elder Father, and while thy enemies live the dye is fast!"

"Seven; Te Paki!"

"As oil and flax to fire, so, O Te Wira, is this heart-tear of thine to the flame of my revenge! Never shall the blaze cease till vengeance' debt be fully paid!"

"Eight; Korokoro!"

"This crimson drop blots out my name and I am titleless, O chief, till I shall write another in thy slayer's blood!"

"Nine; Te Phai!"

"In vengeance, red as this sweat of pain, will I wade to the level of mine eyes!"

"Ten; Karaka!"

"May this drop fall, and fall, and fall again, till it shall wear to shreds my quickest sense, if ever I forget the blood that's due thee, O my brother!"

"Eleven; Tamati!"

"For vengeance, O Elder Father, I will live—or die, if dying pays the higher price!"

"Twelve; Te Ara!"

"That drop is my round world; on it and it alone I live till seas of crimson hate engulf it! Hearken to my vow, O Spirit of Te Wira!"

"Thirteen; Taipari!"

With hands aloft the last man speaks with solemn accent.

"Blood cries for blood, and in my ear of vengeance this one drop roars mighty as the thunder, putting to

the turn all milk of human kindness. Pity grows red; Patience burns in the fierce yellow of hurry, and Forgiveness goes out in darkness! Be sure, O Ariki, I will repay!"

The *tohunga* puts by the flask and kisses the chalice.

"Thou hearest, O Elder Father, what thy people say! In this cup are thirteen lives devoted all to vengeance. For each man a drop, for each drop a man—thirteen in all, and it was upon the thirteenth day that treachery found thee. Hearken, O Spirit of Te Wira! Descend into this cup and give us thy command!"

Oraka holds the chalice high above his head and describes with it a wide circle, calling into the darkness:

"Descend, O Te Wira!"

Again he makes the same gesture, saying;

"Descend, O Ariki!"

And still again the great circle and the cry into the darkness:

"Descend into the chalice, O Elder Father! It is Oraka calls!"

The *tohunga* makes an upward pass with the cup as if to catch some falling object, and straightway a thin, small voice proceeds from the chalice held aloft in his left hand.

"What would you have?" are the faintly audible words it utters.

"That thou shouldst direct our course of vengeance!" answers the priest.

"So be it!" responds the voice. "In this cup are thirteen drops of blood and thirteen pledges. Spread open thy left hand, O Oraka, and flatten its palm—so;—'tis well! Now twirl the cup thrice and quickly pour its contents upon thy level palm!"

The *tohunga* does as the voice directs, after which he addresses the presence as follows:

"Thus far, O Elder Father, thy will is done! What more?"

A deep, hollow voice answers from the ground beneath his feet:

"*Look at thy hand!* Within its palm there is a stain. Mark well its shape and let it be tattooed upon the breasts of all who would avenge my murder!"

The young priest looks at his left hand. The spot of blood in its palm is shaped thus——

"It shall be done, O Shade of our beloved chief!" he murmurs.

"Ay! Ay! so shall it be!" cry the twelve from the other side of the fire.

Again the voice is heard, but this time from high in the upper air, and it is thin and small like the drone of some far-off insect.

"Ye are now a secret brotherhood consecrated to vengeance, and this symbol shall be the badge whereby ye shall know one another."

"Even as thou sayest, so shall it be," solemnly replies the priest.

"Amen! Amen!" chorus the twelve.

"Behold the emblem of vengeance!" cries the *tohunga*, holding aloft his outspread hand that all may see the figure in its palm.

"And make ye thirteen daggers all alike," continues the presence from the limbs of the hollow *rata* tree; "and let the symbol on Oraka's palm mark the blade of each! Farewell, O my brothers! Farewell, Oraka! and to ye also, my faithful, farewell!"

"Stay, O Ariki!" cries the *tohunga*. "Tell us who killed thee and the manner of our vengeance."

"The first thou knowest already, O Man of Vision!" replies the presence from the ground beneath the fire. "My blood is on the pakeha's head. Let him be slain

"'STAY, O ARIKI!'"

and desecrated, and suffer the name of Moreton to spread no farther than his own household. It may be long ere ye can find him, but let the years be to your vengeance but as the strokes of the kea's wing.—Hold aloft thy hand, O priest! Behold ye, my chosen ones, the sign of the *Brotherhood of Vengeance!* In the name of this symbol and of your sacred compact, I bid ye farewell and good speed! Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!" and the thin voice loses itself in the darkness of the upper air.

The thirteen men prostrate themselves upon the ground.

. . . . .

From the pah of the Mohakakas to Port Nicholson or Wellington is a matter of some two hundred miles or so. This distance James Eldredge Moreton covers in six days. When one remembers the condition of the roads at this period, or rather that of those trails which the inflowing civilisation is beginning to call by that euphonious name, and the further facts that the gentleman in question is obliged to make the entire journey afoot, and that he also feels it prudent to travel mostly by night, he will be convinced that, as a pedestrian at least, James Eldredge Moreton acquitted himself nobly.

He is careful to plan his journey so as to reach Wellington under cover of the darkness. It is late Saturday night when he enters the town, and he goes directly to Barrett's Hotel, where, after registering as Charles Danforth of Auckland, he retires for the night. Overcome by fatigue, he immediately falls into a troubled sleep. The pains in his overworked joints cause him to dream that the Mohakakas are dismembering and eating him alive.

It is broad daylight when he awakes. He sends word

down to the office that he is ill and will keep his room. He has been in Wellington before and remembers that close by, a little farther along the shore of the bay, is the Maori town of Te Aro. It is this thought which confines Mr. Moreton to his room. He does not leave it until flood-tide Friday, and even then he allows himself barely time to settle Charles Danforth's account and hurry aboard the vessel just weighing anchor for Liverpool.

It is not until he is well out in the Tasman Sea that a feeling of quasi-security begins to take possession of him, and even then he finds himself watching two dark-skinned members of the crew with uncomfortable narrowness.

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As the weeks pass this feeling of suspicion grows upon him. It mixes itself with the insupportable heat of the Red Sea and all but drives him frantic. When his ship touches at Naples a sudden determination seizes him and, notwithstanding the fact that he has taken passage for Liverpool, he abandons his luggage and, without a word of explanation, deserts her.

A week later finds him in Venice. Young, of fine, manly presence and handsome sunburned face, he soon realises,—and there is seduction in the novelty of the accompanying sensation,—that he is an object of interest to the Italian fair sex. From this observation to moonlight excursions on the Grand Canal is but the short step which separates the subjective from the objective.

Ah! How fair are Italia's daughters when the rich scarlet of youth mixes in their cheeks with the passion-toned umber of the southern sun! Like ports of entry to some undreamed heaven is the fathomless depth of their dark eyes. Thus thinks young Mr. Moreton in

this, the beginning of his thirtieth year, or, to be exact, thus does he think he thinks.

The moon has now put off the filmy veil that covered her and the gondola floats down her beam as if it were a raceway of molten gold. Beatrice Canova—*ah, mia figlia!*—is sitting opposite him, bathed in an uncertain, shimmering, green light that tones her to the passion of the surrounding waters, and mingles the visual music of her silence with the rippling kiss of little waves caressing the gondola's sides. Ah, what gorgeous tints blaze from the canvas of the Now when Youth and Love make up its palette!—thoughts dyed deep in the rainbow, and tender longings full of the fever of the undispersed white light of the tropics!

Ah, no! the young man has not entirely forgotten a sweet-voiced Maori maiden, his wife for but a few short months,—who never seemed to understand him, but he remembers her only as the central dream-figure of another existence,—a picture of the past set in a deep frame of black, and he shows this picture, as a matter of honour, to the young maiden he loves.

He remembers also one Paolo Orsini, to whom Beatrice Canova is betrothed,—remembers well his recent meeting with this gentleman,—the suspicious glance that stabbed him like a stiletto, and the convulsively twitching, tattooed hand that seemed all too willing to render the look indelible;—but this is all history, now, and has been for three long days. Paolo's ship is now at sea and ere it returns—How beautiful she is! By what weird alchemy does the southern sun produce such womanly perfection in fourteen short years?

"Tell me again that you never loved him,—that you love only me!" the man exclaims passionately.

"Indeed, so is it!" she replies, nestling closer to him.

"He is my parents' choice, not mine. I love—only you!"

"Then shall you be mine, and mine only, though there were ten thousand parents and an army of Orsinis!" which prejudged victory this ardent lover celebrates in advance by appropriating to his own arms the very *casus belli!*

And thus drifts the Night down the golden path of the Moon.

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Forty-eight hours later two gallant ships pass each other in the Adriatic Sea. One is the *Venezia*, bound for England, the other the *Tuscan*, bound for Venice. Upon the former is a newly married couple clandestinely leaving Italy, perhaps forever. Upon the latter is Captain Paolo Orsini, to whom the eloping maiden has been plighted.

Darkness, and distance, which is another kind of darkness, keep inarticulate the young couple's secret—for the present at least.

CHAPTER II

To see the thunder-cloud is not to know just where its bolt will fall.

NEARLY a quarter of a century after the events last narrated Mr. and Mrs. James Moreton were residing in Washington. Two years after their marriage Mrs. Moreton had become the mother of a son, and three years later she had presented her husband with a baby girl. For nearly twenty years no other children had come to bless the Moreton household, or to fill the heart-vacancy left by the early death of the first-born. The baby girl had become a handsome lass of eighteen when the second boy came. In defiance of superstition, his parents had given him the name of the first-born,—Adrian Canova Moreton—and were well pleased.

If spectres of the past ever rose before Mr. Moreton, no one else was permitted to know it. There was something in the serenity of his manner, the delicately modulated kindness of his voice, and the light of his smile, which bespoke not only rare physical well-being, but a spirit at peace with all men. If the past had thrust any thorns into his soul they must have been well encysted long, long ago.

Reared in an atmosphere of love and tenderness, it was but natural that Lucia Moreton, the daughter, should blossom into a sweetness of full-petalled womanhood that made her the observed of all her companions and endeared her to all who knew her.

But one cloud,—a mere hand-patch perchance, but still a cloud,—obscured the Moreton horizon. This was the mother's health. She had from her childhood been

subject to occasional attacks of epilepsy. This ailment had come to her as a heritage from her mother, whose natural eccentricity had, at several critical periods of her life, grown into an alienation so well defined and unmistakable that it had been thought best for her own protection, as well as for her better treatment, temporarily to place her in an asylum where she would be in charge of the best Italian alienists.

As is so often the case, insanity in the parent expressed itself as epilepsy in the child. These two neuroses,—the insane and the epileptic,—seem to be, as it were, convertible terms, either one in the parent being liable to transmute itself into the other, as its reciprocal, in the child.

The worst attack with which Mrs. Moreton had ever been afflicted had occurred just prior to the birth of little Adrian the Second. She was now nearly forty years of age and soon again to become a mother. Small wonder was it, therefore, that Mr. Moreton dreaded this critical period with a fear all the more acute in that it added to his memory of his wife's last attack an intelligent appreciation of a certain new factor which had now to be considered.

Southern women pass the milestones of their sex sooner than their northern sisters. Early marriage still further lowers the climacteric age. Mr. Moreton knew that in the case of his wife these tendencies had added themselves together like the summation of two waves with coincident crests, and that he must, therefore, prepare himself for an untoward combination of circumstances. He said nothing of all this to his wife, but he watched her, if possible, with even more jealous care than was his wont. When she began to experience spectral hallucinations, and to be possessed by a vague, inexplicable dread that something awful was about to

happen, he lived in daily expectation of the advent of that *aura epileptica* which he knew only too well would precede the convulsive climax. His wife's inexpressible weariness, her inability to sleep, her extreme depression, so different from her usual hopeful, happy and confident mien, and the nervous twitching of her limbs, were all symptoms which marshalled themselves in irresistible phalanx before Mr. Moreton's beleaguered and hourly weakening hope.

There is something demoniacal in the development of any severe malady. The ailments which feed upon and weaken the physical vitality are often appalling, but, Oh, God! they are as nothing to the disease which inverts the functions of the brain and poisons the very headwaters of the soul!

What could Mr. Moreton do? He was fighting in the dark a foe he had never really seen. Again he felt that heavy sense of impending calamity which had gripped his spirit the night before the occurrence of that dreadful affair which had driven him from New Zealand, nearly a quarter of a century before. All men have at least a tinge of superstition, though most of us prefer to call it by another and more creditable name. This presentiment, which had then come to him with such overpowering conviction that it unsaid many a philosophical dogma, descended again upon his spirit, as a snuffer descends upon the flame of a candle. He had laughed at his forebodings upon that first occasion, but now he simply braced himself to receive what he felt sure was to be loosed upon him. At all events, he would not be taken off his guard.

Throughout their married life Mr. and Mrs. Moreton had been in the habit of taking long walks together, both of them being ardent pedestrians. Of late the wife's condition had caused them materially to shorten

the course covered, but they still spent much time out of doors. One fine June evening they set out for a walk. It was the thirteenth of the month, a day already memorable to the man, but ever thereafter to be marked in the annals of the Moreton family by heavy-faced, black type.

As they reached East Capitol Street, and turned down toward the park, they met two men, who eyed them sharply and even turned, after they had passed, and watched them, as, all unconscious of having excited any interest, the couple walked slowly away. One of the men was of herculean proportions and the other, though much smaller, was of more than average size, and each was more or less disfigured, or beautified (according to the point of view), by tattooing. Mrs. Moreton was still a handsome woman, and it was no new thing for men to stare at her in an undisguised admiration bordering on rudeness. So engrossed were the couple in each other that they did not bestow even so much as a glance upon either of the men.

"That's James Eldredge Moreton!" said one of the men to the other as he laid his right hand gently upon his companion's left forearm. "We turn here; follow me," and they walked rapidly down Eighteenth Street, N. E., to A Street, down A Street to Seventeenth Street, and via Seventeenth Street back again to East Capitol Street.

Why did these men make this rapid detour of a single block and again proceed, with slackened pace, to follow the couple?

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Near the entrance to Lincoln Park, a little within the gates, is a dense clump of shrubbery. Shortly after the Moretons pass this two men seat themselves in its shadow and begin conversing in a low voice. Neither of

them notices a man lying prone upon the warm ground just beyond a luxuriant clump of spirea. This recumbent individual is busy with his own thoughts and does not hear, or hearing, does not remember, anything the men say until his attention is attracted, just as they arise to depart, by what he regards as statements most singular and erroneous. Their very absurdity thrusts them upon his attention and hooks them barb-deep into his memory.

"His cane is my head!" exclaims one of the men in an earnest undertone.

"Your head is your own," replies the other, "but the watch is my heart!" With which astounding assertions the two companions betake themselves into the gathering dusk, while the recumbent figure sits bolt upright and rubs its eyes to make sure it is awake.

An hour later Mr. and Mrs. Moreton are preparing to leave the park. It is now quite dark. As they enter the dense shadow near the northwestern exit a man springs out of the gloom, seizes Mr. Moreton by the throat and says something to him which the wife does not distinctly hear. She sees her husband raise his cane to strike his assailant, and then, for the first time, observes another man, who seizes the upraised arm from behind. Then she sees something glisten in the lifted left hand of the man who has throttled her husband, detects a downward flash of light and hears a groan. With a wild shriek she presses both her hands convulsively to her own breast and feels the wound as keenly as if the knife had entered it. It is all the work of a moment. As her husband falls the second man seizes her, places his hand over her mouth and says to her in a low, intense voice, with his lips almost touching her ear:

"Tell nothing that you have seen! You have a son

and daughter. If you are dumb they shall live, if not, the Moreton race shall cease! Make no further outcry!"

A moment later the terrified woman is alone and bending over her expiring husband. The weapon which has given him his mortal wound still transfixes his left breast. He had seized it, when it entered his body, with such convulsive strength that the assassin had been unable to wrest it from him. His hand, now relaxed, has fallen away from the dagger. The wife at once sees the weapon, and draws it gently from the wound. A torrent of blood follows it, accompanied by a sigh and a quiver of the dying man's frame. The end has come, hastened by this very act. James Moreton's presentiment of impending calamity again justifies itself, albeit not as he expected.

The kneeling woman, with the dagger still clutched tightly in her hand, speaks no word, utters no cry, is not even aware that several persons, attracted by her shriek, have already begun to gather about her. A burning sensation seizes her feet and she thinks her shoes are on fire; but it mounts quickly to her knees, thence to her chest, where it gives her a constricted, stifled feeling, till it seems to her as if she were being strangled. And now the red wave,—it would be visible in daylight—rises to her neck, distends the throbbing arteries and hurls itself, like the sanguinary net of a *retiarius*, upon the struggling consciousness. Wild lights flash in her eyes and dreadful noises assail her ears, as, with flushed face, injected eyes, and horrible, stertorous breathing, she springs to her feet and rushes, dagger in hand, upon the nearest bystander.

The combined strength of four men is scarcely sufficient to restrain her, till she sinks exhausted upon the ground.

At this juncture an officer arrives.

"What have we here?" he asks.

"The woman there has killed a man and tried to make 'way with me," replies the man who was assaulted. "There's the body over there."

The officer examines the corpse and notes, among other things, that the victim's watch-chain is hanging from his pocket.

The watch itself is gone!

CHAPTER III

As the twig is archetypal of the tree, so childhood builds the ladder up which manhood climbs.

It did not take the police officials long, after Mrs. Moreton's arrest, to determine that she required medical, rather than punitive, treatment, and they at once placed her under the care of a specialist in nervous diseases.

Papers found upon the murdered man's person had led to his identification, and his daughter had been promptly notified of her bereavement. The blow had so dazed her that she had found it impossible to understand how her mother could for a moment have been suspected.

After the first shock had passed Lucia was able to give the authorities some information. When questioned regarding her mother she explained, though not, however, without some reluctance, the terrible attacks to which she had occasionally been subject, and referred them to the family physician for further details. She was most emphatic in her assertion, and well might she be,—that her parents had been the very best of comrades up to the very last,—indeed the last thing she had seen her father do was to kiss her mother as together they left the house for their walk.

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The police were in a quandary. The testimony of the victim's daughter, and the fact that both the watch and cane were missing, seemed to make strongly in favour of the wife's innocence. Then, too, the deed had been committed with a dagger of peculiar construction, the

bone handle of which was elaborately and beautifully carved. Such a weapon would have attracted attention anywhere, yet, search as they might, the authorities could find no one who had ever before seen it, or who could explain the meaning of the following peculiar figure damascened into its metal:

Furthermore, Mr. Moreton's clothing had shown evidences of a struggle, and the ground about his body, moistened by the afternoon shower, exhibited the clearly defined footprints of two other men. This led to the belief that two men were engaged in the murder, a theory which gained additional credence from the testimony of one Michael Flaherty, who came to police headquarters and volunteered the following information:

"I coome inter th' park about an hour befoore sundown an' trun mesilf down on th' grass near the aist intrunce. Oi'd been a-havin' a glass or two, an' so Oi didn't notice how damp th' ground wuz. Well, afther Oi'd sprawled there a whoile, Oi hears a couple o' min talkin' low-loike to aich ither, jist on th' ither soide of a cloomp o' bushes. Oi didn't pay no 'tintion to phwat they siz,—Oi was dramin', mebbe—till all of a suddint Oi heerd somethin' that brought me oop standin'. 'His cane is moi head,' siz one o' the min. 'Yer head is yer own,' siz the ither, 'but th' watch is moi heart.' Whoilst Oi was a-thryin' to make out phwat all this mint they walks aff, an' that's th' lasht Oi sees o' thim. Whin Oi rid in the paapers about the missin' watch an' cane Oi t'o'ght o' phwat Oi'd heerd an' conclooded Oi'd betther coome oop here an' till it."

Thus it was that before the doctors would permit anyone to question Mrs. Moreton, the authorities had abandoned all thought of attempting to fasten the crime upon her. Then they learned of one Paolo Orsini, a

tattooed, sea-faring Italian, to whom, many, many years before, she had been betrothed, and they did their best to locate him, but did not succeed in doing so.

For several weeks, during which time she gave birth to her child, Mrs. Moreton's condition was most critical. The baby was a boy and prematurely born. At first it was thought impossible to save his life, but, to the surprise of doctors and nurses alike, he evinced a remarkable vitality for a being so puny. There was in connection with him one thing which gave him, in medical circles, an importance quite beyond his intrinsic merit, and that was a peculiar, lozenge-shaped birth-mark upon his left breast, bearing an astonishing resemblance to a dagger wound. Some of the more conservative physicians, to whom the blemish was shown as a matter of scientific interest, were inclined to the belief that it was all merely a coincidence until they learned that the mark was located in precisely the same part of the left breast as the wound which had killed Mr. Moreton. This knowledge and the testimony of the mother that she had pressed both hands convulsively to her breast, and had felt her husband's wound as if the weapon had entered her own body, caused the most conservative,—those who long since had put up their intellectual shutters—to grudgingly admit that here at last seemed to be an unquestionable instance of what they had always before held to rest upon no better foundation than the idle tales of midwives.

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Mrs. Moreton slowly regained a fair measure of health, but the elasticity of her disposition was gone forever. She lived solely for her children. The story of her life was done; the *dénouement* had already been written, and she prayed for strength to fill in the perfunctory

outlines of the disillusioned tale. To know the goal makes psychologically old the long path leading to it.

Remembering only too well the threat made by her husband's assassins, she turned a deaf ear to all attempts to elicit from her such information as might lead to the apprehension of the guilty parties.

Contrary to all expectations, Baby Moreton not only lived, but flourished. The bereaved mother named him "James Eldredge," after his father, and fondly hoped he might grow to be as perfect a man. As the years went by little James began to give abundant evidence that he was not exactly like other children. He was all but totally indifferent to physical pain, and this fact, as might have been expected, often made him cruel and cold-blooded in his acts, depriving him as it did of the ability to put himself in a sufferer's place. He had alternate periods of exaltation and depression, and often there did not seem, to the casual observer, to be any very good reason for either state. He was, as it were, a child of extremes, yet whatever his transient condition, certain underlying traits of character always made themselves felt. His will was unconquerable. Whenever he set his mind upon a thing, that thing would he have. This gave his mother much uneasiness and his playmates not a little inconvenience.

An instance fairly illustrative of his temperament occurred upon his entrance to the grammar school. His very first day was made memorable by his encounter with the ubiquitous bully. This conspicuous savage, rendered immune from effective retort, as he fondly believed, by his superior stature, proceeded to indulge in what appeared to his peculiar bias as rare sport, using Master James Moreton, the while, as a base of supplies. James, who was experiencing one of his periods of depression, felt much disinclined to action,

and accordingly endured the savagery of his tormentor with a patience far in excess of what he could be depended upon to vouchsafe on other occasions. All this, of course, the bully interpreted as evidence of fear, and accordingly redoubled his insults. Finally, filling his mouth with water, he came and sprayed it, as if he were a Chinese laundryman sprinkling clothes, full in his victim's face. With the rapidity of a released spring, James Moreton seized him by the throat.

"Beg my pardon for that now and here," he cried, "or I'll pound you till you're glad to do it on your knees!"

The rapidity of the act somewhat disconcerted the bully. For a moment he feared he had made a mistake, but was reassured as he noticed with what ease he was able to remove his assailant's hands from his throat.

"Huh! What does it think it is?" sneered the bully. "Say, fellers, it wants me to beg its pard'n, an'—an' this is how I do it!" and he struck the smaller lad a blow that brought him to his knees.

In a moment all was commotion.

"A fight! A fight!" yelled each little savage, in gleeful anticipation, any thin film of civilisation with which he may have been varnished quickly flaking off and exposing to view his naked savagery.

Scarcely had James regained his feet before a ring was formed and two score or more excited urchins were impatiently awaiting one of the lowest and most degrading of human spectacles,—the deliberate attempt of two individuals to inflict pain upon each other. And this they called *sport!* And savages of larger pith, both as individuals and as *nations*, apotheosise the biceps of power till the fetid fetich is a stench in the nostrils of latter-day decency. An appeal to force is a moral anachronism, a retrogression to the jungle red

in tooth and claw. Has not the human race yet reached an adult estate?

There was a look upon Master James's face which was a revelation to his school-fellows. Calm, rigid, and with the almost transparent whiteness of marble, it had the appearance of composing itself for eternity. Strange to say, there was in his expression no indication of malignity,—none of those facial exhibitions of his own weakness by which one so often attempts to terrify his adversary. You would have said, had you judged the lad solely by his appearance, that he was contending with some impersonal, elemental force, some inanimate machine for which he felt neither love nor hatred,—nothing, in fact, but a determination to subdue it to his will. Superior weight, size, strength and reach were all in the bully's favour, and greater than them all was the knowledge that he had them all. When the school bell rang, the bully, by common consent, was adjudged victor, and there the matter was supposed to end.

A physiognomist would have noted the difference between the two lads' countenances and it would have meant much to him. The face of the elder boy was livid with rage and hatred; that of the younger calm, determined, resourceful, with a subtle something about the bleeding lips which looked like a nascent smile.

Deep in his cowardly core the bully whispered to himself that he was glad it was all over, and that he had so well maintained his reputation for superior prowess. His victim's insensibility to pain had worried him not a little. He could not understand how it was that injuries which would have elicited shrieks of agony from an ordinary boy were endured by Master James with a placid countenance and without protest.

When the morning intermission occurred James immediately sought out his adversary and, to the amazement

of his school-fellows, forced him to continue the contest. When the school bell rang this time the "honours were easy," and every little onlooking savage was all "goose-flesh," just below his thin veneer of civilisation.

At noon Master Moreton again promptly sought out his foe and renewed the interrupted contest. On this occasion it was clearly evident he had the best of it. The bully was getting his brutal appetite for fighting more than satisfied.

During the afternoon recess he received some pretty severe punishment, and after school his fate was even worse. To all suggestions of a truce Master Moreton made the same reply:

"When you beg my pardon on your knees, but not till then!"

And thus it fell out. So complete was his subjugation that if James would threaten to attack him he would lie down upon the ground at his feet, and, as is so often the case, the two lads became good friends.

The dogged determination which he had displayed in this conquest led James's schoolmates to nickname him "Dog" Moreton, an appellation which clung to him with a persistency worthy itself.

Another characteristic of this lad was his conspicuous ability as a trader. Whether he swapped a jackknife or a jack rabbit, he invariably managed to get the better of the bargain.

It must be admitted that Master James did not, in these transactions of incipient commercialism, always follow the noble precepts laid down by the sixteen crucified Saviours of mankind, and the countless moralists with which they have been interspersed.

As he grew older this spirit of commercialism took even stronger hold upon him, and he determined to become one of those social fungoids known as a "captain of

industry," or, to speak with French accuracy, a *chevalier d'industrie.*

During the elder James Moreton's residence in New Zealand he had managed to secure a vast tract of the tribal land of the Mohakakas,—some twenty thousand acres or so. He had bought all this for a ridiculously small number of axes, some fifty muskets, a little powder, and a few figs of tobacco,—bought it despite the fact that Maori lands were held in common by the tribe occupying them, and that there was usually a very strong sentiment against their sequestration. A few years afterward, in 1861, rich deposits of gold were discovered in New Zealand, and some of the best finds were upon his land, which had previously been reduced from twenty thousand to twenty-five hundred and sixty acres.

This extraordinary shrinkage in his real estate had occurred through a flaw in his title. In an amendment to Governor Hobson's ordinance of June, 1841, it had been declared that the Commissioner should recommend no land grant in excess of twenty-five hundred and sixty acres, unless specially authorised by the governor. This authorisation could not be obtained, neither would the Mohakakas refund any of the purchase price, so that where he had bargained for twenty thousand acres, Mr. Moreton secured something more than a tithe of that amount. Still, considering the gold mines, even this was not so bad a trade as it might have been.

When James Moreton, Jr., learns of these possessions he beseeches his mother to permit him to leave school and depart for New Zealand at once, urging upon her that agents are of necessity dishonest, and maintaining that what is needed is "a man (*sic*) on the spot."

Mrs. Moreton, while she recognises that there may be some weight in both of these postulates, refuses to per-

mit James to leave school, informing him that his elder brother, Adrian, is planning to attend to the matter as soon as he completes his education.

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While all this is transpiring, in thirty-nine degrees north latitude, other events are taking place in thirty-nine degrees south latitude which are of interest to this narrative.

In the beautiful Maori village of Taranaki, near the spot where Mount Egmont rears its colossal cone, lives Tarore, daughter of Ta Pura. Her mother, who died in her infancy, came from the Mohakakas, on the other side of the island. Few earthly ties are stronger than those which bind the Maori to his family, and Ta Pura all but worships his beautiful Tarore.

Just to the north of Mount Egmont is Inglewood, a little town of less than four hundred inhabitants, mostly English. This is the home of little Alis Ora Leigh, part English and part Maori, between whom and Tarore there exists one of those strange, inexplicable bonds of sympathy—found in history, say, every other century—that binds together into the unity of undying affection the widest diversity of habit, of religion, and of race.

The night that James Moreton, Jr., beseeches his mother to allow him to go to New Zealand, and is refused the coveted permission,—is the morning on which little Alis Ora Leigh, on the other side of the earth, is preparing to go to Taranaki to visit her beloved friend, Tarore.

So overjoyed is the maiden in anticipation of what is before her that she fairly dances in excess of animal spirits. As she enters the Maori village news of her approach quickly passes from mouth to mouth, till it reaches a group of Maoris far down the main street.

One of these calls out from the doorway of a low structure, whose thatched roof reaches nearly to the ground:

"Tarore! Tarore! The little pakeha miss, he is here! Come, quick, and meet it!"

This announcement, couched in language which exhibits the well-known difficulty experienced by the Maori with the English pronoun, at once brings forth a dark-eyed, brown-skinned lass with long wavy hair, black and silky, and a grace of carriage that would do honour to a young princess. She casts one glance down the village street and then, with a glad cry, bounds off like a young gazelle. A moment later the two children are in each other's arms, indulging in a most singular and tumultuous greeting. Alis is exploding kisses all over the brown face of her companion, after the manner of the Anglo-Saxon, while the Maori maid is doing her utmost to find a little insignificant pink nose and to press her own against it, after the custom of *her* people, for where the English osculate, the Maoris rub noses by way of salutation.

"Oh! but I'm so glad to see you again!" Alis exclaims with a little impulsive squeeze. "Did you miss me when I went away?"

"Ah, miss you!" replies Tarore. "The days had no end, they only turned black at night. I could have wept, but tears at parting are unlucky and are forbidden us, so I could only cry inside where no one else could know, till the savour of my soul was salt like the sea. Oh, it was all so like eating fern-root without a *kinaki*. I sent you my love every morning with the song of the Tui, but I could not tell if you received it, so I threw reeds, and when they all fell toward Inglewood I said: 'It is well; she has heard. She will come again and I shall see her!'"

"And here I am!" and the delighted Alis begins a dance, so fascinating, in its childish grace, that her companion instinctively catches its rhythm and imitates its movements, till she remembers how dreadfully *tapu* female dancing is among the Maoris. She is but twelve years of age, scarcely more than a year Alis's senior, yet in many ways she is as mature as an English girl of seventeen,—far more so than is her companion.

And what is the explanation of the strange affinity existing between these two children? Is it that wonderful, expressive ability of the younger child,—that personal magnetism which causes her to be a luminous, radiant being, and is destined later to make her the effulgent centre of many human moth-orbits? That is not all, much though it be. It is a long story, and the blurring of some of its chapters spoils its continuity. We are so prone to erase the example after the answer is obtained,—as if the solution would confess the riddle it solved!

But see! the two friends, with arms entwined about each other, are sauntering toward the forest.

"Oh, Tarore, I've the greatest secret!" Alis cries. "You'll promise you'll not tell a living soul, not even—the birds?"

"Till the moon shows her back, I will not tell!" responds Tarore.

"Well, I've been promised——"

But let us stop our ears and hurry away. Secrets! Girlish secrets, flashed with the blush of the opening bud, and breathing the old-new attar of romance, have the sanctity of the confessional. . . . . Let us not enter a soul's temple without knocking at its door,—and heaven forfend that, tarrying without, we should press a profane ear to the keyhole.

EPISODE SECOND

The Marked Man

CHAPTER I

Love is the leaven of existence. Through its wondrous alchemy the animal lump became first human, then divine, and in the New Day, whose rosy dawn already enhalos our topmost heads, no other measure shall there be for life but just its sum of love.

"PARDON me, a little more to the left,—so!" and Elbert Reiss took the fair head gently between his hands and slightly altered its position.

It was an entirely professional act, yet he would have been a poor observer who had not noted the peculiar reverence with which it was performed.

The love of men differs as men differ. Nature reaches her goal by divers paths. In Elbert Reiss love was a religion and beauty his greatest passion. He cared nothing for mere comeliness when uninformed by personality. To him the soul was an artist, and the body its creation, and he judged this production precisely as he would have judged a picture, which is to say he looked for the personality of the artist, and if he found it not, or, finding it, it did not please him, he pronounced against it in so far as he was concerned.

And the young woman who was posing as his model; did she please him? He had not dared to ask himself the question. The blood boiled hot in his heart when she met his gaze, and he trembled when he touched her. Her mere presence so unnerved him that he found himself obliged to have recourse to his mahlstick, lest in his work his excitement should confess itself indecision.

And the model? Did her sea of psychic exhalations

wash back upon her stained by the heart it had flooded? *Quien sabe?* Had it, indeed, done so, its crimson ebb and flow would very prettily have accounted for sundry little pink waves that ever and anon overspread two damask shores.

"You must be tired. We will rest now for the day."

The words were commonplace enough in themselves, but there was something in their intonation which momentarily drove the blood from the face of the fair model. She felt the pallor she could not see, and hastened to ask:

"—And I shall come again——?"

"—Wednesday at the same hour, if convenient to you. I have Romeo for to-morrow. May I send for the dagger he is to wear?"

"I brought it with me to-day," she answered, passing him a thin box.

"Thank you; it was very thoughtful of you," said Mr. Reiss.

"May I look at the picture before I go?"

"Indeed, I'd be glad if you would, and let me have any suggestions which may occur to you," the man replied.

"Oh, how charming!" she exclaimed. "What a delightful sensation it is to see one's self idealised. Indeed, sir, you have painted me as I would like to be, rather——"

"—Rather than as you are?" he said, voicing her thought for her. "Ah, no; you mistake! If—if I have changed a single detail it was unintentional and —and the picture has suffered by it!"

The young woman glanced quickly at him and then was silent for a long time. When at length she spoke it was in a deep, mellow voice, so faint it could barely carry the weight of its utterance.

"'WE WILL REST NOW FOR THE DAY'"

"Wednesday at two. Good-bye," and she left the studio.

Elbert Reiss gazed long at the door after it had closed behind his model, as if the wood were glass and he could see through it. Then he quickly drew the curtain of secrecy upon his sacred canvas, lest a profane eye should see it, and seized his violin. Music was very dear to him, and he was, withal, a conspicuously brilliant player.

For a few moments the instrument fairly sobbed in its exuberant eloquence of emotion; then the player paused, the victim of his own marvellous expression, hastily put by his violin, seized his hat and left his studio.

When he reached the sidewalk he turned to the left and walked rapidly away. He neither knew nor cared whither he went. How long or how far he walked he never knew.

It was nearly dark before his slackened pace indicated that he was returning to his normal self from far, far afield.

He began now to notice where he was and what was occurring about him, without realising that he himself was a factor of the scene.

He saw a well-dressed man upon the opposite side of the street removing the peel from an orange as he sauntered along and letting it fall at his feet upon the sidewalk.

"He's one of those porcine *caveat actor* fellows, who wouldn't turn his wrist to throw that into the street if all creation slipped upon it and broke its legs," he muttered to himself. Then he saw a young man emerge from a doorway, glance furtively about him for a moment, and then begin picking up the scattered orange-peel. Moved by curiosity, Reiss started to cross the street.

Before he had reached the other side, however, he saw the young man slyly thrust a portion of the peel into his mouth and the remainder into his pocket. These acts thoroughly aroused his attention.

"My God, is it possible!" he ejaculated half audibly, as he made directly for the doorway where the young man stood.

"Excuse me, sir, but can you tell me what this number is?" he asked.

The young man glanced at the doorplate.

"Five forty-six."

"*Five* forty-six! Why, I'm six hundred numbers from where I ought to be," said Reiss with apparent dismay. "I say, my young friend," he continued, "will you pardon me if I take the liberty to ask a favour of you?"

The young man's hand went to the bottom of his empty pocket. The artist saw the pathetic movement, —the more pathetic because involuntary,—but continued as if he had not noticed it. "I've a bundle of stuff six hundred numbers farther up that I want to get over to my rooms, and I'd be glad to pay you half a dollar to get a lift on it. Now don't say yes, if I'm asking too much of you, because I can do it alone if worst comes to worst, though I feel just now decidedly fagged out."

"My services are at your disposal," replied the young man with alacrity. "I shall be glad of the walk, for I need exercise." He glanced a moment at his patched and threadbare clothes and then continued with something like a stifled sigh: "If you will lead on I will follow—at a distance."

He was now out on the sidewalk where the artist could see him distinctly. Reiss cast one rapid, searching glance into the young man's pinched face, and then burned his boats behind him.

"Are you in any particular hurry?" he asked.

"None whatever; I have all the time there is."

"Would you mind waiting for me," Reiss asked, "while I get a bite of something to eat and rest a bit? It will take but a few minutes, and will make a new man of me."

"I'll wait with pleasure; don't hurry," and the young man was about to return to his doorway.

"Oh! but you must come along, too, so I won't have to come back after you. I know of a little Bohemian place up farther, where you'll be welcome to a seat even if you don't care to eat," and without more ado he took his companion's arm and led him away amid such a conversational outburst that the kidnapped young man, after vainly waiting for an opportunity to protest, finally abandoned himself to his fate.

When Reiss and his companion were comfortably seated in an obscure corner of the little restaurant, the former said in an offhand manner:

"What a bore eating is! Just as a fellow begins to feel that he's a trifle better than sheer clay, whang! goes the clock, and he hies him off to tear flesh with the rest of the carnivora. Tell me what to eat. I never know what to order. I'm going to ask you to join me for the sake of sociability. You can go through the moves, even if you don't care to eat anything. Perhaps, if you watch me, you may be able to scare up an appetite."

"Thank you, I think I have a tame one that I can catch without chasing," replied the young man, with a wan smile.

After the orders were given the artist said abruptly: "And now do you mind telling me your name? Mine is Reiss,—Elbert Reiss,—dabbler in colour and wielder of the mahlstick."

"My name," the young man replied, "is Eric Montrose, and I am at present engaged in reducing my flesh by playing a continuous performance entitled 'Tiring Out Fate,' written by one who never did it, and played by one who fears it can't be done,—in short, I'm an inventor looking for capital to exploit what most people call my own enthusiasm. The situation is not without humour,—viewed from a distance. Just now I'm so near I miss the perspective."

"Oh! Don't I know all about it, though," said Reiss. "I wore out a dozen pairs of trousers, and as many complete sets of good resolutions, waiting for my first commission, and when, after long years it came, I was relatively indifferent to it. It is one of the saddest experiences of life that the fruits of our endeavours can seldom be plucked till the bloom and the glame have left them and the worm is at their heart. Year after year I toiled and struggled, giving the public my best of life, hope and youth, only to see them pass the offering by unnoticed. I dipped my brush in my very heart and spread its blood upon the canvas, yet the message found no eye, till one day a wealthy lady, whose soul was in revolt at the toy lives led by the rich, saw and understood. I got a commission to paint her daughter's portrait, after which all was easy and—and I had almost ceased to care."

When Reiss finished he noticed that his companion's lower lip trembled, and there was a strange, misty, far-away look in his eyes,—such a look as searches the living past for a dead mother—but he spoke no word. There was a long silence, and then Eric Montrose, with the diffidence of a maiden, reached over and pressed his companion's hand.

He felt a new inspiration. There is such a marvellous power in the man who has keenly suffered, and who

has spelled out aright the dreadful lesson of his agony. Mother Nature, kind in her unkindness, has sung her secrets to him, as she rocked him in the cradle of his pain. Yes, it may be she thought to croon him to sleep, but what then? Is it not often better so?

O, faith of our fathers with our fathers gone! let not the higher light show only deeper shadows! Shore up the hope within us that by Reason's torch we yet shall find the noblest life, assisted by the cruel ills which drive our fickle, wayward feet back to the narrow path.

The artist had the satisfaction of seeing his companion eat a tremendous meal, and of knowing that he would have at least half a dollar to guard against hunger in the immediate future.

. . . . .

It was nearing midnight before Eric left the studio. He had found the confidant for whom he had so hungered, and had unburdened himself to him. The artist had been particularly interested in some of his inventions, and had said at length, impulsively, as if the thought had just occurred to him:

"See here! I've an idea. There's a large back room in there where I store things. Now, why couldn't you come here and look after the studio for a while till we get acquainted. Then, if we find we can live together and keep our fingers out of each other's hair, why not move your models and things into the back room, and make this your headquarters? The room has a separate entrance from the hall, and we needn't mix science and art a bit more than we want to. You see, I need someone to look after things once in a while, and I fancy you could use the small wage I should pay you. In the meantime I might be able to interest some capital

for you,—stranger things have happened. What do you say?"

Eric Montrose was in poor condition to say anything. His funds exhausted, the rent of his little attic room far in arrears, and all his ready assets distributed among neighbouring pawnbrokers; out of work and threatened with ejectment, he had felt sure that an angry fate had at last caught him in a *cul-de-sac* from which there was no escape. He reached over and seized the elder man's hand in a trembling grasp.

"Do you think I could do it?" he asked, with touching eagerness. "I—you see—well, I——" then with desperation—"Look at my clothes!"

"The duties would be nothing to you," said Elbert reassuringly, "and as for the clothes, if you'll be here to-morrow at ten we'll find a way to fix that part of it. I think we shall get along together famously."

And so, indeed, they did. Within a week Elbert Reiss had sufficiently satisfied himself as to the character of Eric Montrose to cause the inventor's few effects to be moved into his back room, and it would have been hard to tell which of the two was the more delighted with the arrangement.

. . . . .

One afternoon, just after Eric had taken up his abode at the studio, Elbert stood before his easel in the little alcove, toning the background about the figure of Juliet. Thus far he had kept this work for the most part secret. If anyone entered the room he would usually draw the curtains in front of his canvas before advancing to meet him. He had been asked to give the picture as little publicity as possible, but he had a personal reason of his own, far stronger than this, for the care with which he obeyed the request. One of the

figures,—that of Juliet,—was so like its living prototype! He could almost see it breathe, and he loved to watch it, to hide it away and to think it his, and his only.

On the afternoon in question, however, a gentleman entered and advanced directly to the easel. Reiss quickly drew the curtains, but not in time to prevent his visitor from getting a glimpse of the picture.

"By Jove, but that's a stunning female!" he ejaculated. "Suppose you open up there and let me have another look. A fellow doesn't see a petticoat like that every day."

The face of Elbert Reiss was a study. It looked as though his innermost soul were being seared with a white-hot iron.

"You must pardon me, sir," he said when his anger had in a measure subsided, "this is private for the present. You will doubtless have an opportunity to see it all in good time."

"No time is good but now," replied the other brusquely—"especially where a woman's concerned! However, it's for you to say, I suppose."

"I shall be pleased to show you any of my completed work," the artist said, his natural good-nature once more reasserting itself.

"Thanks; I know something of it already. I came to give you a commission to paint my portrait if we can arrange as to sittings, and he passed a card to Reiss bearing the inscription "Mr. James Eldredge Moreton."

This was on Tuesday, and on Friday Mr. Moreton had his first sitting. In painting portraits Reiss used every endeavour to justify his subjects at their best.

It was his custom, therefore, to draw his sitter into conversation, ascertain what themes lay nearest his

heart, and then to use the enthusiasm these topics elicited to draw the whole man into that unity of expression so necessary to a living likeness.

It did not take Reiss long to learn that Mr. Moreton's greatest interest centered about business. His sitter would rise to nothing but a financial bait. The artist, therefore, made heavy drafts upon his small store of commercialism, and he found it quite sufficient, meagre though it were, to awaken the enthusiasm of his subject. Truth to tell, when Mr. James Eldredge Moreton would converse at all,—and when a business topic was chosen,—he was more than willing to do most of the talking.

At his second sitting Reiss found an opportunity to tell him of Eric's inventions, and was much gratified at the immediate interest he displayed in them, particularly in the new system of wireless telephony.

"Tell the young man," he said to Reiss, "that if he can do what you say, he need not worry about funds. I'll take care of all that, and make him a rich man. Tell him to call and see me at my office, 30 Broad Street, say to-morrow at eleven, and we'll talk the matter over."

When the artist communicated this to Eric that young gentleman was almost beside himself with excitement. Now, after years of privation, he felt sure he was to attain that success which his patient effort had so long merited.

Alas! that he had not heard of that "castle on the Rhine" which an erstwhile well-known New Yorker promised one Ottmar Mergenthaler. Unfortunate, too, that he did not know that James Moreton's own indifference to bodily pain had bred in him a physical cruelty that had long since overrun its own rim and poured itself into the psychological domain.

The next day Eric called on Mr. Moreton, and before

the interview ended they had signed a memorandum agreement.

One thing which particularly attracted Reiss's attention during Mr. Moreton's next visit to his studio, was what he considered the astounding and apparently unconscious egotism of the man. He would refer to himself as "one of the ablest business men in New York" and descant with the utmost assurance upon the great things he would yet accomplish. On one occasion he talked enthusiastically about himself and his plans for half an hour, and ended by saying:

"The world's ideal of a business man to-day is John D. Rockefeller, but there is a greater one coming. Mark the trend of affairs. The Standard Oil is getting its iron clutch on everything. Light, heat, transportation, food, banks, trust companies, insurance companies, public utilities: they are all in its hands. It controls the mines and railroads; the legislatures and the colleges; the bureau of statistics and the press; the courts and the central government. It poisons the child in the primary school with little, sugar-coated pellets marked 'patriotism' and, attaining to Caligula's wish, clutches its fingers around the one throat of humanity. What a magnificent power! And all the result of simply knowing how to corrupt men! I always feel like taking off my hat when this monopoly is mentioned. I tell you, the Standard Oil is winding itself, like a huge python, about the waist of the human race, and when it gets ready for the final squeeze there'll not be a whole bone left. In the meantime, keep your eye peeled and watch 30 Broad Street," and he winked ponderously at the puzzled artist, as he continued, holding up the forefinger of his left hand and shaking it to and fro: "If, in the near future, the centre of gravity of the financial world

doesn't shift from 26 Broadway to 30 Broad Street, James Eldredge Moreton is no prophet!"

This was one of Mr. Moreton's talkative days. On one or two occasions he had appeared depressed,—even morose, and had resisted every effort to draw him into conversation. At such times Reiss had found what he could to do upon unimportant details, and had brought the sitting to an end as soon as possible.

"I say, Eric," said Reiss, after one of Moreton's talkative visits, "our capitalistic friend has a deal of self-confidence, hasn't he? The joke of it all is that those who know Mr. Moreton best come nearest to endorsing his own estimate of himself.—You saw that fine-looking lady in here yesterday afternoon? Well, that was Mrs. Moreton. I'll tell you about her some time—perhaps. Do you know, every time Moreton has been here he has tried to see my Romeo and Juliet? I refused him point-blank at our first meeting, and he didn't like it in the least. I'm told that it is a boast of his that he never permits himself to fail in whatever he undertakes. This is why his friends have nicknamed him 'Dog' Moreton, I suppose.—Well, we shall see. To-morrow I finish his portrait, and if he expects to see the big canvas in spite of me,—he will make the attempt then."

A seer could not have prophesied better. After the sitting was finished and Mr. Moreton was apparently about to leave, he stepped back toward the curtained alcove, as if to take a final look at his own portrait. Reiss laid down his palette, arose, and stood beside him, to all appearances much interested in contemplating his own work.

"By the way, Mr. Reiss," said Mr. Moreton with an engaging smile, "you have never yet told me the name of the model who posed for that stunning figure you hide so carefully."

"Felix Maguire," replied the artist with a trace of impatience.

"Ah! Thank you," Moreton rejoined. "I should have been more explicit. My interest was in the female—incomprehensible as it may seem. What is her name?"

The artist looked him fixedly in the eyes and said firmly:

"I do not care to tell you, sir!"

"Then surely you must let me look!" and with a single backward step James Moreton seized the curtains and tore them open. The movement was performed with extreme rapidity, yet it was not so quick but that, at its completion, Moreton found the athletic young artist between himself and the canvas, which was back toward him. Reiss, his phlegmatic German blood now thoroughly up, his arms folded across his powerful chest, and his eyes narrowed to a mere slit of serpentine fire, was a formidable obstacle to overcome. In an instant he had been metamorphosed from a polished gentleman to a Gothic savage whose hand would rise red from where it fell. A kind instinct told James Moreton that, despite all he could do, it *would* fall if he took one step more.

While the men stood thus at gaze the studio door opened and the model entered. Reiss, who was back to her and concealed by the alcove, held his position. Moreton, however, advanced a step, bowed affably to the young lady, and said:

"Whom shall I say?"

"Miss Sherwood, if you please," replied the young lady.

"Mr. Reiss, Miss Sherwood is here," said Moreton with a sarcastic exaggeration of politeness which tore the artist's sensibilities as a saw tears flesh. "I find

this much the better picture! Good-afternoon, sir!" he said from the doorway. "Good-afternoon, Miss Sherwood! I am charmed to have met you. You will forgive me, I know, for expressing the hope that I may see you again," and he shot a mocking and defiant glance at the glowering artist.

If the cold, green, withering look which replied to that glance had been duly matched with venom, that shot had been James Moreton's last.

CHAPTER II

If photometry best measures lights by the shadows they cast, why should we not gauge men by the enemies they make?

THOSE who have read "The Darrow Enigma" will not be surprised to learn that Mr. George Maitland's conduct of that case attracted such wide attention that he soon found his services in great demand. It is true that most of the propositions put before him were such as he did not care to entertain, since the duties of an ordinary detective were anything but congenial to him. He is primarily a scientist and is possessed of that rarest of all brain-types known as the "generalising intellect." Intricate problems have ever an unflagging interest for him, while those of easy solution, or requiring only painstaking attention to step-by-step details, do not in the least attract him.

Thus did it happen that he left Boston and came to New York. A case had been put before him which at once excited his imagination and fastened his attention. A young man, who previously had always lived in Washington, had recently gone into business in New York. He had so prospered that in an incredibly short time he was accounted rich, and numbered as one of the youngest and most promising captains of industry in the Metropolis.

In the meantime he had married a fascinating young woman for whom he had made a most vigorous competition. He was now about twenty-six years of age, and had for several months, he wrote Maitland, been the recipient of letters threatening his life, each of which informed him that he was, to quote its exact phrase, "a

marked man." He volunteered the information that, under ordinary circumstances, he should attach no importance to these threats, but that, since his father had been mysteriously assassinated more than a quarter of a century before by men who, at the same time, had frightened his mother into a silence in the matter which nothing could induce her to break, and, too, on account of the further fact that the letters made no specific demands upon him and did not, therefore, attempt to levy blackmail, he felt warranted in using every endeavour to ferret out their source.

Maitland, of course, did not learn all these facts from the gentleman himself, but got many of them through certain friends of the young magnate who were obliging enough to exhibit some of the more interesting bones of his family skeleton. Though there are many of us whose anatomical closets are too scantily equipped to make a really interesting display, there are none so poor as to lack a willing exhibitor.

Had the case been an ordinary one Maitland would have declined to interest himself in it, but the fact that it had a perspective extending back a quarter of a century, and that the threatening letters were not mere bungling attempts at blackmail, lifted the affair so far out of the commonplace that it fascinated him. He accordingly replied to the young magnate's letter as follows:

"Boston, July 12th, 19—.

"DEAR SIR: I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 11th inst.

"If agreeable to you I shall do myself the honour to wait upon you at your office this Thursday at 2 P. M. We can then discuss matters more at length.

"In the meantime, I remain "Very truly yours,

"GEORGE MAITLAND.

"Mr. James Eldredge Moreton,
"Johnston Bldg., No. 30 Broad Street,
"New York, N. Y."

In accordance with this appointment Maitland duly waited upon Mr. Moreton and ended by interesting himself in his case.

At first George engaged temporary accommodations in New York, being loath to leave Boston, but eventually he permanently established himself there, since he found that he could prosecute his scientific labours as well there as anywhere. His life-work was scientific research. He embraced Mr. Moreton's offer because it interested him in the first place, and, in the second place, because he badly needed a radical change of thought.

. . . . .

By the latter part of July the Maitlands were comfortably settled in New York.

Mr. James Moreton marvelled not a little at the way in which Maitland conducted his case. At their second interview George had said to him:

"I shall wish you to prepare for me, with the utmost care, three lists of names with the accompanying addresses, as follows: first, a list of all your friends; second, a list of your enemies, including any who, in your opinion, might profit should ill befall you; third, a list of all such acquaintances as you cannot readily classify under either of the other two lists. I need not, of course, tell you that if you expect me to serve you to any purpose, you must give me your unqualified confidence, which, I trust, I need hardly add will be considered sacred."

This Mr. Moreton promised to do, and when the lists were at length prepared Maitland perused them with great care. As might be supposed, his most immediate interest centered in the list of enemies. The very first name elicited from him a low whistle, and caused him to throw the paper upon the table and relapse into deep thought.

"Mrs. Hortense Marie Moreton, No. —— Fifth Avenue, New York," was what he had read. The address was the same as that of his client, Mr. James Eldredge Moreton.

When Maitland again took up the inglorious list he felt all but certain that the woman who had been given the questionable honour of first place was none other than Mrs. James Moreton.

The second name was that of Mr. Elbert Reiss. Consulting a directory, Maitland learned that this gentleman was an artist, and he determined to investigate him first of all, for the reason that he could call on him, ostensibly to see his pictures, without any previous introduction.

He determined, if possible, to make the acquaintance of every person named in the three lists until he was thoroughly saturated with Mr. Moreton's environment.

When Maitland entered the studio of Mr. Elbert Reiss the artist was busy in an inner room, so that the visitor had ample opportunity to examine not only the pictures, but also the appointments of the studio.

The work of Elbert Reiss marked him as a man of rare versatility and depth of artistic insight. In vain did Maitland search for those mannerisms, those little tricks of habit, which act as name-plates to the productions of so many contemporary artists. Every canvas was a frank confession of personality, but not of limitation.

While he was still examining the pictures the door opened and a young man entered. He hung his cap in a little recess behind a curtain and advanced toward Maitland.

"You are waiting to see Mr. Reiss?" he asked.

"To be frank," Maitland replied, "I have no particu-

lar business with him, yet I have tarried hoping to have the pleasure of seeing him. The man himself, you know, is ever the larger moiety of his work."

"It is certainly so with Mr. Reiss!" exclaimed the young man with such warmth that Maitland glanced searchingly at him.

He was of medium height, rather slight of form and with a pale and somewhat pinched face. Privation was writ large all over him. As he had spoken his large, brown eyes, half glazed in introspection, had broken their encystment, and lighted enthusiastic fires in the sombre, nocturnal depths of their shadows. His features though not classic, were yet beautiful, and his dominant expression was that of an ineffable eagerness,—an almost pathetic outreaching such as one occasionally sees in young children, and oftener in dumb beasts.

"I see the man has charmed you even as his work has me," Maitland ventured.

"Indeed he has, sir!" was the reply. "He charms everybody. He will be out presently and then you will see for yourself. You like the pictures?"

"Yes, very much," Maitland replied. "The Romeo and Juliet there, with the life-size figures, is it not capital? There is something in the face of Juliet that would make Romeos of us all. I have seen both Briggs's and Ward's pictures, but their treatment of the beautiful Capulet does not compare with this. The figure is more or less ideal, I suppose?"

"On the contrary, it is true, religiously true, to life! Elbert would not so much as change——" But he checked himself, much to Maitland's disappointment. After a pause he continued: "You will soon have an opportunity to see the lady in the character of Juliet at a Broadway theatre."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Maitland. "And her name is——"

"—A mystery just at present. It is only during the last few days that Mr. Reiss has permitted even her likeness to be seen. She is a star new to the American firmament, and her manager is whetting curiosity to a razor edge,—though not, I trust, with any intention of shaving the public," said the young man with a faint semblance of a smile.

"The bearded public will not be shaved if they see a face like that, and as for the rest, *they'd* never permit it, lest they should exchange peach-bloom for sideboards," Maitland jocosely replied, as his eye caught a curiously-wrought weapon half-hidden among bric-a-brac which littered a little table in the farther corner of the room.

"Romeo's dagger?" he interrogated; "I think I recognise the carving."

"Yes," the other answered. "It was of so quaint and romantic a pattern that Mr. Reiss painted it with the utmost fidelity. Did you ever see anything like it?"

"Never," said Maitland. "Do you know the significance of these figures so carefully damascened into the metal? They must have been meant to convey some weighty message to have warranted such an outlay of effort. Now, that irregular figure there by the hilt,—it would be interesting to know what that signifies."

"I'm afraid we'll have to await the discovery of another Rosetta stone. Mr. Reiss has not the remotest idea what it's all about," said the young man.—"Ah, here he comes!"

The door to the inner room opened and a lady came forth attired for the street. Maitland glanced carelessly at her, and merely noted her fine form and commanding presence.

"How do you do, Mrs. Moreton," said his companion with somewhat heightened colour, as he advanced and gave the lady his hand.

"Ah, Eric, I am glad to see you looking better," she replied, shaking the proffered hand heartily.

"Eric! Mrs. Moreton!" thought Maitland to himself. "I'll wager the young man is number five, and the lady number one on my schedule! By Jove, though!" he continued internally, "she could easily head a more flattering list than that. A perfect type of femininity, too! My list has some interesting reading. If there's anything morally askew with this woman, it will be a pretty hard blow to the favourite theory that criminal females are always more or less masculine in appearance,—not a very flattering thought for us men, by the way. So-called theories, however, have a fashion of retroactively disproving their own soundness, when they are——" But these unvoiced reflections were cut short by the entrance of Elbert Reiss, the artist. He followed the lady to the door and said to her as she entered the hallway:

"Friday at two?"

"Friday at two if—if I can get away without——"

But Mr. Reiss stepped into the hall with her, and closed the studio door so that Maitland could hear no more. When the artist re-entered the room a moment later Eric said to him:

"This gentleman has been waiting to see you, Elbert, for quite a while."

"Indeed! You must pardon me, sir. I did not know anyone was here," said the artist to Maitland with a simplicity and directness of manner of which Maitland immediately made mental note.

"If the remainder of Mr. Moreton's suspects are like the first three I have met," he said to himself, "I think

I shall have to look for mischief among his bosom friends," after which unvoiced observation he said to Mr. Reiss:

"The apology should be mine, for I have really no excuse for this trespass other than that I have enjoyed your personality so much in paint that I wanted to have the pleasure of seeing it in flesh. If you will permit me I will introduce myself." And he handed his card to Mr. Reiss.

"I am very pleased to make Mr. Maitland's acquaintance," replied the artist, extending his hand. "And this is my friend, Eric Montrose; Eric, Mr. George Maitland.—Shall we sit down and chat a bit? There, that's better. You are fond of pictures, I see."

"Extremely so," Maitland replied. "Had I two lives I should give one to art in some one of its forms."

"And having but one, you——?" Mr. Reiss asked with a smile.

"I give that one to science," George responded.

"Indeed! That will interest Eric, for science is his goddess as art is mine," the painter continued.

"I am afraid my friend will give you an inflated idea of my small merits," Eric hastened to say. "I'm hardly what most people would call a scientist. I'm only an inventor."

"Isn't that modest, now?" laughingly queried the artist. "He's not a scientist, he's only the fellow who makes the abstraction concrete. The scientists tell us all about the propagation of electric waves without wires. Mr. Marconi makes these waves carry dots and dashes, while Mr. Eric Only-An-Inventor forces them to transmit articulate speech through hundreds of miles of unwired space."

"Do you mean to tell me he has invented wireless telephony?" asked Maitland excitedly.

"Precisely that."

"Is it patented—that is—do you permit anyone to see it?"

"Oh, certainly!" Eric replied. "A company is already formed for its exploitation. You can find out all about it from our president, Mr. James Eldredge Moreton, No. 30 Broad Street."

"James Eldredge Moreton!" Maitland's exclamation was involuntary.

"Do you know him?" Mr. Reiss asked with more than ordinary interest.

"But slightly, very slightly. I have met him in a business way," George replied.

Reiss was indeed number two, but surely Eric Montrose could not be number five upon the list of enemies!

At this juncture the door opened and a young woman stood for a moment framed by the casing. The picture was one of rare loveliness, and it required no mind-reader to see that it deeply moved both Elbert and Eric, though it was evident that the magic lever touched the two personalities at different points.

The beautiful face was familiar to Maitland, but he could not, for the moment, tell where he had seen it. Then his eye rested on a large canvas with two figures. This was the Juliet!

CHAPTER III

Financiers, caught without their social halos, look almost human. Nor is it all appearance. They are even subject to mortal frailties, though most of them can be trusted to stand ever nobly staunch and true to what they regard as their own interests.

WHEN Maitland returned home, after making Reiss's acquaintance, he found a letter postmarked Boston awaiting him. It was from his friend Dr. Edward Willard, and ran as follows:

"MY DEAR GEORGE:—Boston is the hub of the universe!—I fancy I hear some good New Yorker ejaculate, 'The slowest part of the whole wheel!' Here the question is,—or rather used to be,—'What are you?' While I have heard it whispered that in your city the formula reads, 'What have you got?'

"Boston, you perhaps remember, is the home of culture—and beans, so that for you New Yorkers not to 'know beans' 'argues yourselves unknown,' and is a badge of barbarism.

"So much, my dear George, to get you into my atmosphere—hem!—the atmosphere of culture,—no sir! not wind—'*atmosphere!*'

"Now for my news. We are going to New York for a time. I knew you'd be surprised. You remember that cancer of Latour's which I was obliged to tell him could not be cured? Well, I've been thinking of that a good deal lately, and looking the matter up a bit. I've made up my mind thoroughly to investigate this X-ray and Finsen-ray treatment. The former ray gets after the 'bugs,' and the latter after the effects of the former. I have already the biggest static machine I could find, and now I'm looking for something I won't have to 'sit up nights with,'—something which won't 'get off its feed' if my breath happens to exceed the minimum limit of humidity.

"I tried to learn something at Harvard, but oh, my! they were so ponderously non-committal that I gave it up in despair. What an awful thing it must be to feel that your slightest word will be taken *ex cathedra!* Finally, I was told that New York was the place for me if I wanted the latest X-ray products, so, in con-

formity with this advice, I shall do myself the honour of visiting you. Everybody sends much love. 'We-all,' as they say down South, miss 'you-all' very much.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you are doing, yet, as your physician, I order you to quit three-quarters of it at once. Good-bye. Look for me day after to-morrow.

"Ever yours,

"EDWARD WILLARD."

This letter gave Mr. and Mrs. Maitland great pleasure, for they were both exceedingly attached to the young physician, as well as to his wife and family.

In due time the doctor arrived, and was much pleased,—as indeed he had good cause to be,—at the reception he received.

Maitland introduced him to many of his friends, including Elbert Reiss and Eric Montrose, with both of which gentlemen he himself had come to be somewhat intimately acquainted. The doctor took a great fancy to Eric, and became so much interested in his inventions that he was only too glad to accept an invitation to be present at a demonstration of wireless telephony to be given at Mr. Moreton's office for the purpose of interesting capital. Maitland, who saw in this an opportunity to bring the doctor and Mr. Moreton together, was also well pleased with the arrangement.

When the time arrived for the demonstration, the Broad Street office was full to the utmost limit of its accommodations. Mr. Moreton was in a state of enthusiastic good-humour.

"Gentlemen," he began when all who were expected had arrived, "I have called you together this afternoon to witness the most marvellous feat of modern science,—telephony over long distances without the use of wires. We have here a transmitting and receiving instrument, which will be duly shown you, and also an exact dupli-

cate of this apparatus, in a little place I have fitted up for demonstrations, stockholders' meetings, and the like, over in Jersey City. Mr. Montrose's assistant is now in charge of that instrument, which, you will please understand, might just as well be in Boston or Chicago, so far as results are concerned.

"After the demonstration subscription papers will be opened, and I shall be pleased to explain anything in connection with the business side of the enterprise upon which you may need further information. I have now the pleasure of introducing to you one of the most remarkable inventors of this or any age,—Mr. Eric Montrose."

Eric was very pale as he rose in response to this introduction, and he feared for a moment that his wits would desert him.

"Mr. Moreton has done me the honour," he began slowly, "to allude to my humble results as 'marvellous.' In a world where everything is, in the last analysis, inexplicable, I doubt if we can properly call one thing more wonderful than another, though we are ever prone to consider phenomena marvellous in just the ratio that they lack familiar correspondences in our minds.

"Among the laity the present telephone, so well known to us all in its external aspects, is, in its fundamental principles, but little understood. In order for you justly to appreciate the invention before you, it will be necessary for me to make what will perhaps at first impress you as a digression from the matter in hand. Few, if any, great inventions are the work of any one man. Others prepare the way for him who is to bring the thing to a triumphant conclusion. I am not the first to transmit speech without the aid of wires. What I have, as I believe, been the first to accomplish, is the perfection of a system making possible the transmission

of articulate speech without wires between points many hundreds, possibly many thousands, of miles apart.

"To explain the means whereby I attain this result, I shall have first to ask your attention for a moment to the precise nature of the problem before us. In wireless telegraphy the message consists of a series of dots and dashes, so that, given a wave-force capable of travelling to, and affecting, the receiving instrument, there is, in a word, little else to do than properly to interrupt this wave-force. With the transmission of sound, however, the problem is very different. Here it is not merely enough to have an outgoing wave of force capable of reaching the receiver; it is equally essential that the *form* of that wave, if I may use the term, should exactly correspond to a phonogram or 'sound-picture' of the voice producing it. A simple illustration will serve to make the distinction clear to you.

"Suppose I had here, connected with the water-supply, a hose, the nozzle of which was provided with a valve; and suppose one of you were over on the other side of Broad Street. Now if I were to turn on the water and the gentleman across the way would stand the ordeal, it would be possible for me to play a steady stream against one of his eardrums. This would convey no message to him; but, if he understood the Morse code, and I turned the valve off and on with properly spaced intervals, his ear would be smitten by long and short sections of water resulting from the alternate letting on and shutting off of the fluid. This illustrates dot and dash transmission. If, however, I wish to transmit not merely dots and dashes, but the form of a spoken word, I must not close the valve as before, but must keep the stream more nearly continuous while, with extreme rapidity, I so alter the valve that its volume will change in exact conformity with the phonogram of the word

being transmitted. If I do this, the receiving tympanum will be subjected to an undulatory current of water which will act upon it in precisely the same way as would the current of air were the chosen words spoken into the ear of our imaginary assistant. This, then, is the problem. Now for the means I employ in its solution."

Eric paused a moment to arrange his instruments and Mr. Moreton embraced the occasion to say:

"We shall not weary you, gentlemen, with a technical description of this whole invention, as we have deemed it more satisfactory to adapt this demonstration to the layman. Those of you who wish to go into the matter more at length will find Mr. Montrose glad to accompany you after he has finished his general explanation."

"As Mr. Moreton has said," Eric continued, "I shall take time to touch upon only the essential features of my invention. I shall assume that you are more or less familiar with wireless telegraphy,—at least with the nature of the Herzian waves, and the construction of the Branly coherer, which have made the Marconi system possible. Let us begin with our transmitter. Here is the instrument. You perceive these two balls separated by a small gap. They are solid, highly polished, and in all respects identical with those used in wireless telegraphy. We must now force a current to traverse from one of these balls across the gap to the other, and this current must be actuated by the human voice, and vary in strength in exact conformity with the form of the sound-waves. How shall this be done? I have here a source of electricity, and here a powerful induction coil actuated thereby. When I close these terminals, so, you see a continuous band of light passing between the balls. Now it is probable, though authorities differ, that it is not the current which actually passes between the balls which travels outwardly through space

and affects the receiving instrument, but rather that this discharge sets up a series of oscillations in the balls themselves, which oscillations are propagated outwardly to great distances, and serve to carry the messages. We need not, however, go deeply into this.

"Now there are certain rays discovered by Becquerel and know as 'Becquerel rays,' which have the singular property of conferring upon air the power of conducting the electric current. Here is an ordinary mouthpiece and diaphragm, and, as you see, pendant from the centre of this diaphragm is a little receptacle containing a powerful radio-active substance. As the diaphragm moves, this moves, and, under the influence of the voice, alternately approaches and recedes from the spark-gap between the balls, thus rapidly varying the conductivity and throwing the discharge into undulations conforming to those of the transmitting diaphragm. The manner of 'stepping up' this electric current, where the distance requires it, is not new, and I need not enlarge upon it. So much for the transmitter.

"The receiver is even simpler to understand. This is the instrument. It at once suggests an induction balance and is connected to a specially constructed wave-collector located, in this case, upon the top of the building. This telephone receiver, made with more than ordinary delicacy, is connected with the induction balance, which, in its turn, is connected with the wave-collector. We will now proceed to converse with my assistant in Jersey City. I have signalled him. Talk just as you would with an ordinary 'phone," and Eric passed the receiver to Maitland.

In this way nearly an hour was spent, to the great astonishment of all present. When at length they departed, after many compliments to the inventor, Mr. James Eldredge Moreton footed up his subscription list

with evident satisfaction. All but three had subscribed, and the treasury of The International Wireless Telephone Company had at its command many thousands of dollars as the result of the demonstration.

. . . . .

And the inventor? How much of this money did he get? Not a dollar! He was impressively told how grateful he ought to be to have his invention in such wonderful hands, and informed, in the same breath, that every cent of the cash thus far received was "blood-money."

He didn't quite know what that term meant in such usage, but inferred he was to understand that it was sacred to treasury uses. When he objected to this arrangement Moreton said to him:

"Now see here, Montrose. You have an invention,—a good invention,—but without money it is worthless. Now if I make it valuable, as I propose to do, to whom will the credit belong, you or me? Now, you want to remember that capital can get along very well without your invention, but your invention can't get along without capital. The man with the dollar is dictator, and you've got to do as he wants or you can't succeed. I'll make you a rich man in good time, if you only let me. I do things *my* way. I am one of the most successful business men in New York, and I owe it to the fact that I do things, *my* way. Once I adopt a course I never swerve a hair's breadth from it, if I can possibly avoid it. I don't go looking for *easier* ways. I stick right to that course, and if obstacles are in the path, I go through them,—not around them,—*through them!* In fact, I rather like obstacles, as I like breaking horses. They're good to keep a cutting-edge on one's will. Most inventors are simply impossible from a business stand-

point. Nothing can convince them that their wares have no value till capital creates it."

It was the old, old siren song of sophistry which capitalists have ever sung to inventors—so like that other song, in the same key, which capital delights to sing to labour, in the vain hope that the workman will one day forget its anachronisms and come to believe that the consumption of wealth antedates its creation,—that no man could possibly ever have dug a clam with his naked fingers, till some one else had dug one and fed him with it!

"Mr. Moreton," said Eric slowly, after a pause, "I hope you will not be offended if I do not at all agree with your reasoning in this matter. The fallacy is quite patent. An invention can surely succeed without money, as easily as capital can increase itself without some sort of investment, so that if the union of invention and capital bring good results, then they are both necessary to those results in their totality. If, now, you know your Mill, you will appreciate that where two things are necessary to a result, one cannot be said to be *more* necessary than the other."

Mr. James Eldredge Moreton made no reply, but contented himself with bestowing upon the inventor an enigmatical smile which left rather an unpleasant impression in that young man's mind.

The Captain of Industry was wondering if he had found another whetstone for that volitional cutting-edge to which he had so recently referred.

CHAPTER IV

In politics the law of gravitation expresses itself in expediency. In physics it makes its record in terms of weight. In ethics it registers itself in selfishness; and, even as expediency is the sociological toboggan-slide leading straight to governmental perdition, so selfishness is an all-down-hill short cut to moral Gehenna.

THE Spanish proverb reads; "Patience and shuffle," but among the proverbs of Gotham this will be found to have been Americanised into: "Patience and hustle." In order for business to become an act of worship, as has now eventuated, it was first necessary for money to become a fetich. This has already been accomplished.

What wonder, then, that the strong bias of James Moreton's nature, superimposing itself crest to crest and trough to trough upon the noxious wave of slimy greed beneath which Humanity's better sentiments are at present submerged, should have cut red into the very soul of the man—the addition of more to what was too much already.

Relatively few things change their kind by changing their degree. To this general consonancy, however, penuriousness is an exception. Beyond a certain point meanness tends ever to become dishonesty, with a power usually not to be resisted. Men who begin by squeezing the dollar till *they* perspire, are prone to end by *sweating* the coin itself.

Let it not be thought that James Moreton was "mean" in the ordinary acceptation of that term. His transactions had the generous proportions of the bank-robber,

rather than the petty narrowness of the sneak-thief. Had it been otherwise, never could he have been known as the most promising of all New York's young industrial captains.

Extract the fifth root of that transaction which places a halo of commercial glory about the head of your trust magnate, and the quotient is *jail*. Multiply by itself a sufficient number of times the offence of the humblest sneak-thief, and the product is mercantile apotheosis, social deification, a coach-and-six, purple and fine linen! Thus we have the arithmetical evolution and involution of latter-day financial greatness.

Into this environment James Moreton brought a gambler's passion for excitement, an inexhaustible store of energy, a determination that unsaid defeat in advance, and, more is the pity, one of those puff-ball consciences which constitute the chiefest factor of success in the attainments of most of the world's heaviest financial ordnance. He belonged to the second-childhood of ethics, that is to say, to the first savage aspect come again as the third estate; the dotage of morality, wherein the filmy, myopic vision loses all distinctions of the moral and the immoral, in the *un*moral.

To him the external world was but the photosphere of his own radiant self. If he took that to which another had a prior claim and a better right, he did it in the spirit of other industrial captains, not because he wished the rightful owner any harm, but simply because he desired that owner's effects for his own use. In this he was not wantonly cruel. Had it been necessary for him to sacrifice life in the blowing up of a competitive pipe-line, he would doubtless have used a charge which would have made death as speedy and painless as possible, from which it will be seen that even the Kings of Mammon are not without a sense of tenderness for their

humble subjects. A crown may produce pressure upon the brain, but, thank God, it leaves the heart free!

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The tall, mellow-chimed clock in the corner of Mr. Moreton's office was just about to strike three. Near by, the Stock Exchange was approaching the closing hour. To the uninitiated, standing in the gallery and looking down upon the busy floor below, the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of excitement and greed would have looked like the wild scurryings of some gigantic ant-hill into which a megapod had stepped, or like a lunatic asylum in the throes of a nightmare. Well might such an observer have said with Burke, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

And yet this was a quiet day. The market was exceptionally dull, and the gambling lacked that razor-edge of fierceness which seems ever seeking competitive jugulars. James Moreton thought he had never seen the Exchange so hopelessly stupid.

"I am going back to the office," he said to a fellow-member, "and have a game of solitaire for excitement. Why don't Wall Street and the banks go in like men and knife the widow and the orphan, if they want to, and have it over with, instead of squeezing the blood out of them a drop at a time, and making the Exchange as infernal a bore as poker without a stake? I tell you, it's getting too dead slow for me," at the end of which remark the clock in his office in the Johnston Building struck three, and the Exchange closed with the last stroke, as if it had been only waiting for that particular signal.

Five minutes later James Moreton entered his office. He was in one of his depressed moods. Excitement was to him as the breath of air in his nostrils, and things

had seemed very dull to him, of late. He lived only through the pleasure he derived from the chase, and what chase could there be when affairs slackened pace to a mere purposeless saunter?

He picked up a paper and tried to get interested in the financial column, only to find that he had read it all in the morning, discussed it all day, and found it at last too vapid to merit consideration. He threw down the paper with the air of a man who has just come to a sudden determination, arose, took his hat and cane, and went out upon Broadway. He turned his back upon the Battery and walked rapidly along with the true Metropolitan look in his eyes. If there were anyone else on Broadway that afternoon, he gave no evidence of being conscious of it.

Well up Broadway, where the eagle on the dollar so far forgets itself as to preen its feathers,—thereabouts where Mistress Commercialism brightens her attire and assumes a solicitous smile, stands a fine theatre, which is here called "The Odeon" for no better reason than that that is not its real name. Its manager's identity is similarly lost in the pseudonym, "William Wilkes."

Messrs. Moreton and Wilkes were very good friends. They had first met—but there! Both men have excellent wives—at all events they are so considered—and excellent women should not wantonly be pained.

The pranks of some men make capital drummers' stories whose *dénouements* are lost in loud guffaws, but, somehow, when told to the little woman in the glare of the fireside they seem to lose their uproarious humour. What, think you, can be the matter with her risibilities? See, she weeps, not laughs! Ah! bathos and pathos, in fact as in name, are all but coalescent. The one gravitates into the other as vocalisation dies into aspiration. The little woman,—God bless her!—is too near

the facts, and her conscience doesn't turn lining out with true masculine facility. And these men? We need only say that they are *selfish*, if we are wise enough to know that selfishness is the psychological name for hell.

James Moreton stood long in the entrance of "The Odeon" gazing at a large picture of Romeo and Juliet. Never before had mere paint seemed to him so like a confession of heaven.

On Monday the star would make her first appearance—first, at all events, in America—and it was already Friday. After a little she would be going away to shed upon others the light of her countenance—wondrous even upon canvas!—At the thought the muscles of James Moreton's jaws hardened, and he grasped his cane convulsively.

It was with reluctance that he finally tore himself away from the fascinating picture and made his way to the office of his managerial friend.

"I say, Will," he began, as soon as they had passed the time of day, "that's a stunning picture you've got out there. What's the prospect? Is the dear public rising to the bait?"

"It's coming fine," replied Mr. Wilkes. "I'm 'most afraid I'll have to cut it open to get the hook back."

"How about the star? Do you feel sure of her?" asked Moreton with keen interest.

"Sure of her!" ejaculated the manager. "Young man, you'd better go back and take another squint at that picture. Why, bless your buttons! if that young woman just came out and said 'Fee, faw, fum,' and then smiled, all New York would go daft. You don't appear to appreciate the quality of these goods. Sure of her! Whew!" and he looked pityingly at his companion.

A feeling of pride took possession of Moreton as his

friend sounded the praises of the star, as if the beautiful young woman were already his, and he stood full in the blaze of her effulgence—the lord of the conqueress!

"I referred more particularly to her histrionic ability," Moreton rejoined. "I was thinking of the critics."

"Histrionic fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Mr. Wilkes lightly. "Critics, indeed! I say, Jim, have you lived all these years to think the public takes the critic seriously? Why, bless your buttons, man! when criticisms on any topic show a general agreement, it's because they were written with a gold pen. You didn't know that, eh? No, I s'pose not. Mary Anderson—or rather she that *was* Mary Anderson before she took up with the nobility—hit it about right when she said she'd take the box-office for her critic. Now, as for histrionic ability, my boy, this young woman is a 'winner,' I tell you!"

"I say, Wilkes, where on earth did you pick her up?" asked Moreton.

"Ex-cuse *me!*" said the wily Wilkes, as with his forefinger he pulled down the lower lid of his left eye. "Just now that's a state secret, but you needn't let it worry you, for I don't mind telling you there are no more like her where she came from. Nope; I took the last.—Perhaps you'd like to tell me how low you're going to bear the stock I'm interested in."

"Oh, hang your stock!" retorted Moreton.

"Yaas; mebbe that's the only way it can be elevated so's the bears can't reach it," drawled Wilkes with provoking serenity, as he enjoyed his companion's impatience.

"Come now, old man," said Moreton; "cut that out. You know you can trust me. Where's she from?"

"From heaven, I should say, judging by appearances,"

and William Wilkes looked at his visitor with mock solemnity.

"By Jove! I'll take that as her address," retorted Moreton, with more earnestness than he was wont to express—a fact which caused the manager to bestow upon him a rapid, sidelong glance.

"So do. What a beastly pity you'll never be able to attend any of her at-homes, old man," drawled Wilkes with grotesque sympathy.

"Misery likes company, and I shall have yours, my boy," Moreton retorted. "Now I have a favour to ask, and you know what that means."

"In algebra they call it an equation," laughed the manager.

"I'll make it better'n that if you succeed," his companion replied. "I want to give Miss Sherwood and her friends a little supper at the Waldorf after her first performance. Say a dozen plates. There would be Miss Sherwood, you and me, and any nine other friends she might care to invite. Can you arrange it for me?"

"Any champagne?"

"Enough to float you!"

"Consider the affair settled," and William Wilkes extended his hand by way of a seal to the compact.

"And she'll be there?" asked Moreton doubtfully.

"If not, I'll go home sober," returned Wilkes jocosely.

"Then it is indeed settled," said Moreton, seizing the proffered hand. "And now, good-bye. Remember, Monday night," and he left the manager's office.

The next morning at the rehearsal Mr. Wilkes broached the matter of the invitation to Miss Sherwood. Her first impulse was to decline it, but she finally yielded to the persuasions of her manager when he said:

"You are a stranger here, and we ought to lose no opportunity to make friends with our public. This More-

ton is a man of great wealth and financial influence—a good man for any manager to interest in his productions."

"I should indeed be ungrateful if I forgot all you have done in my behalf, or needlessly stood in the way of your reaping the fullest possible returns therefor," she said slowly. "There is something—but never mind—I will accept the invitation for myself and nine friends. You may say so for me," and she at once determined that a certain queenly young married woman, whom she had met at Mr. Reiss's studio, should be the first of the nine to be invited.

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The advent of a new and radiant luminary in the dramatic firmament constitutes a social epoch in the city in which it takes place. Add to this the complete mystery which enshrouded the name of Marion Sherwood,—for William Wilkes had done his work well,—and one may readily realise the ferment in the golden kettle of the upper ten.

William Wilkes handled this seemingly impossible gentry with the tender deftness of an entomologist transfixing a rare butterfly, and his method expressed itself chiefly in terms of secrecy. He was one of those silent linguists,—one of those dumb polyglots who can hold their tongues in forty different languages, and the result was, that whether New York had plucked the new star from Taurus or from Ursa Major, even Wall Street, with all its knowledge of bulls and bears, was powerless to decide.

Thus the interest in Miss Sherwood grew daily keener, and daily Manager Wilkes felt its edge at the box-office with ever-increasing satisfaction. When at length he ordered up from its subterranean depths the "Stand-

ing-Room-Only" sign, he drew a long breath and felt that all was well. Monday night came at last.

"The Odeon" was packed almost to suffocation—and, as usual, the fire regulations were openly disregarded.

George Maitland was an ardent admirer of Shakespeare. He had seen many Juliets in his time, and was all impatience at the prospect of adding another to his list. His friend, Dr. Willard, had asked him which one of all the Juliets he had seen he thought truest to Shakespeare, and he had replied:

"Ah, Ned, that is a hard question to answer. I found much in all of the portrayals to delight me,—yet they were very, very different. Of them all I think I can truthfully say one thing, namely, they were all Anglo-Saxon Juliets,—at least they so impressed me, though I was rather young when I saw Neilson."

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Just as the orchestra was beginning to play, Mr. and Mrs. George Maitland, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Willard, Mrs. James Eldredge Moreton and Messrs. Elbert Reiss and Eric Montrose, entered the auditorium and seated themselves together upon the left side of the house, a few rows from the stage. Mr. James Eldredge Moreton was already in the centre of the front row close to the musicians. He did not see the party as it entered; neither were they aware of his presence at the time.

When the orchestra was "flashed off" a wave of suppressed excitement swept over the house from pit to gallery. It seemed as if all held their breath. What was this Juliet like? How old was she? Was she as beautiful as her picture promised? Whence did she come? Could she really act? Were her costumes actually the marvels report asserted?

These were the questions which hung tremulously upon Marion Sherwood's first appearance, and when the

great audience at last caught sight of her, it burst, as with one accord, into tumultuous applause. For a moment the actress seemed quite taken aback, as if she were entirely at a loss to understand what she had done to merit such an ovation.

Before she had spoken a line Maitland whispered to Dr. Willard, "An Italian at last!"

As the play progressed the audience came more and more to realise that they were in the presence of histrionic genius, and they gave vent to their enthusiasm in no uncertain language.

After the "potion scene" she was called again and again before the curtain, and was presented with several floral offerings, one of which was an enormous bouquet of white roses bearing in its spotless concealment the card of Mr. James Eldredge Moreton.

And the gentleman himself? He watched the beautiful Capulet like one under an irresistible spell. There was, in the intensity of his earnestness, that cat-like presage of a spring which seemed to add teeth and claws to his admiration.

When Juliet spoke the lines,

"O happy dagger!
This is thy sheath; there rust and let me die,"

the expression upon the face of James Moreton, as she stabbed herself and fell, was startling in the extreme. In it chaos strove strenuously for mastery. The features shifted in wave-like pulses, like to a pool of water smitten by a sudden gust of wind. When, with an almost superhuman effort, he finally regained a measure of expressive self-control, his countenance was ashen-pale and his features drawn and set, particularly about the boldly-chiselled jaw.

And he had met this young woman but twice, and was,

moreover, the husband of a young, beautiful and accomplished wife, who, at that very moment was watching him narrowly through a pair of opera glasses, which did not miss so much as the tremor of an eyelash.

When the final curtain fell, the audience arose like a single organism and called loudly for the star. Miss Sherwood, true artist that she was, felt much averse to disillusioning her audience by appearing alive before them so soon after the death of Juliet.

The applause had assumed that measured, rhythmic beat, the meaning of which professionals know so well, when Manager Wilkes drew back the curtain for the passage of the star. For fully three minutes there reigned a perfect pandemonium of applause, and, in the very front and centre of it all, like a pivotal demon, stood James Eldredge Moreton comporting himself for all the world as if he were on the Stock Exchange frantically attempting to "smash" some "gilt-edged" industrial.

. . . . . .

In a sumptuously furnished suite in the Waldorf-Astoria Mr. James Moreton awaited the arrival of his guests with what patience he could command. The table, spread in the inner of the two rooms, was entirely to his satisfaction. A profusion of flowers marked the place of the principal guest directly opposite that of the host. Mr. Moreton thought, with a delicious thrill of anticipation, that he would be looking directly at her all the time, while she—she could not help seeing him every time she looked up. There would be others present, of course, but what of that? Wilkes was all right, and, as for the rest, he neither knew nor cared who they might be,—at least, so he told himself,—and straightway he heard them coming along the hall.

"This way, this way, ladies and gentlemen—damnation!"—(this latter under his breath)—"come right in. Delighted, I'm sure!—Marie," he continued, addressing his wife with a suavity the full meaning of which she alone understood, "will you kindly show the ladies where to put their wraps," and he indicated the place reserved for them with a careless gesture of the hand, while he bestowed a covert, green flash upon the placid Mrs. Moreton, the which he duplicated a moment later as his eye fell upon Elbert Reiss.

He would have much preferred that these two, his wife and the artist, had been supping together at Delmonico's, or The Black Cat, yes, or enjoying *table d'hote à la diable* in perdition, for that matter.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this narrative to detail all the events of the banquet. Suffice it to say, that with Marion Sherwood, Mr. and Mrs. Maitland, Dr. and Mrs. Willard, Mr. and Mrs. Moreton,—the "and" being here a *disjunctive* conjunction,—William Wilkes, Elbert Reiss, Eric Montrose and two members of Miss Sherwood's company, the two hours spent at table passed quickly enough. Toast followed toast till the effect of the champagne on those who pledged full measure upon each occasion was more than doubtfully manifest. Both Messrs. Moreton and Wilkes were in a state of exhilaration bordering upon ebullition. Not that they were intoxicated; indeed, it is doubtful if Mr. Moreton had ever permitted himself to get into such a condition, but that he was visibly excited by the potent fluid he who ran could easily have seen.

It was near the end of the banquet; Elbert Reiss, who had managed, much to his host's disgust, to seat himself at the right of Miss Sherwood, was conversing with that young lady in a subdued tone, to which she had every appearance of giving her undivided attention.

"I cannot tell you," he said, "how much I enjoyed your performance. It seems to me that no one can play Juliet properly without she be possessed of real tragic greatness, and for the young woman so endowed a grave peril lurks in this wondrous poem, for it is almost as like a poem as it is like a drama."

"And that danger is?" she asked.

"That she shall fail to subordinate the tragic to the beautiful,—that she shall fall into Garrick's error when he sought to repair what he fondly believed to be a blunder on Shakespeare's part," he replied.

"That were indeed a pity," she said softly. "It seems to me the pathos of the piece is merely intended to give an added depth, a sense of solidity, as it were, to its incomparable beauty."

"Ah, you are right, I am sure! It is a sort of third dimension, adding weight to form," he said enthusiastically. "If you will pardon me, I would like to congratulate you upon your voice.—I have heard but one other like it, and—and I shall never forget either hers or yours——!"

She leaned slightly toward him and asked softly, with tremulous interest, as a momentary pallor, plainly visible to her keenly observant host, overspread her face:

"And this lady—this other?"

"She was the daughter of Burgermeister Lang of Ober-Ammergau, the 'Mary' of the Passion Play when I saw it in 1890. I should have thought——"

But at this point James Moreton, who had missed no word of all that had passed, broke into the midst of the artist's sentence.

"I give you a toast!" he cried, raising aloft his glass. "Here's to the fairest——"

But Elbert Reiss would not brook the affront. He raised his voice slightly and continued:

"I should have thought when you read the lines,

"'O happy dagger!
This is thy sheath; there rust and'——"

But he did not finish. With an inarticulate guttural James Moreton sprang to his feet. His face and neck were a deep crimson, and he seemed the very incarnation of frenzied rage. The glass of champagne was still in his hand. He drew his arm quickly back and was about to hurl the glass violently into Reiss's face when Maitland, who was next to him, seized his outstretched arm.

Mrs. Moreton quickly arose and went to her husband. She was very pale. Everyone had now arisen.

With laboured utterance, as if every word tore itself through the quick of sensation, the restrained man said, with a ghastly attempt at a smile:

"I—beg—your—pardon, ladies—and gentlemen. Pray—be seated—all."

But the festive flame had charred to a gloomy snuff, and the little party almost immediately broke up.

Ill-feeling is a bad sauce for hospitality.

CHAPTER V

Hell, like heaven, is a condition of mind, and jealousy is its other name.

THE business at "The Odeon" exceeded the most sanguine hopes of William Wilkes. From New York he sent his company to Philadelphia, after which they were to play Baltimore, Washington and Richmond, working back again to New York via Charleston, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester and Albany.

When Miss Sherwood left New York it seemed to James Moreton as if the sun had ceased to shine. He was desperately in love with the fascinating Juliet, and he felt—well, if ever you have watched a beloved being carry away your soul, and realised that she would not bring it back for many a weary week—perhaps never—you know just how he felt; and if, on the other hand, you have no such tender legend on some well-thumbed page of your heart's history, words, in however so graphic a collocation, could not convey to you his experience. The void left in his life by Miss Sherwood's departure grew daily to a greater ache.

There are but few things in this life for which he cared at all, but these few desires, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed all the rest, and acquired thereby a strength proportionate to their excessive nutriment. One of the peculiarities of this young man was his inability to deny himself anything which he really coveted, in consonance with which characteristic we find him attending three performances in Philadelphia the very first week of Miss Sherwood's engagement there.

Just how he learned that Elbert Reiss was there also,

and engaged upon a portrait of Miss Sherwood to be hung in the foyer of "The Odeon," will probably never be known. Suffice it to say he ascertained it in some way, and it seemed to turn his very soul green side out. He was morally certain it was merely a ruse on the artist's part to enable him to see the actress daily. A tantalising spirit of prophecy whispered to him that Reiss would piece out the work so as to follow her from city to city. Oh, that miserable certainty, born of the knowledge of what we ourselves would do in like circumstance! Moreton was perfectly well aware of Elbert Reiss's passion, and he did not make the mistake of thinking him an insignificant rival.

"It's a game where tricks count," he had said to himself on more than one occasion, and the thing which now tore his patience into very rags was the fact that his opponent had secured the lead, and held a suit God only knew how long!

It was in this state of mind that his physician found him on the morning after his aforesaid third visit to Philadelphia.

Henry Forsythe Carew, M. D., was a man of wide influence and most excellent practice. With no shield or buckler other than his own rare and well-equipped intelligence, he had on several well-known occasions fought Death to a standstill single-handed when older campaigners in the medical ranks had dropped their lances and ignominiously fled to the cover of their reputations.

Had he not been esteemed one of the very best doctors in New York he would never have been consulted by Mr. Moreton; for that young man considered himself quite worthy of the best of everything, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, he thought it "good business" to be known as the patron of excellence.

Dr. Carew had formerly lived in Washington, and he and James Moreton had been school-fellows there, and later classmates at college, though, truth to tell, this acquaintance had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Moreton's subsequent employment of the physician, for this commercial young man prided himself on his ability to keep every vestige of sentiment out of business. "There is no friendship in business," was a phrase which could be found at any time just back of his teeth.

Dr. Carew had not intended to make a professional visit. He had called on business of his own, but he detected a restlessness, a lack of focus, in his client's manner which seemed to him to warrant a word of warning. Of course, he did not so much as dream what was the cause of the trouble. If any being on earth could look the "green-eyed monster" out of countenance without so much as the tremor of a lid, that individual, he would have said, was Mr. James Eldredge Moreton.

"I did not come to give you medical advice," he said, "but I tell you that you must immediately let up on this feverish existence, else I'll not be responsible."

"Feverish existence! My God!" ejaculated Moreton. "For deliberation just coming to a standstill my life is nonpareil. Feverish indeed! Why, Henry! time crawls over me like a slothful slug on the nether side of an ivy leaf. I am not *living*. Life is a breasting of the waves; an overcoming of the tides; a baffling of the counter-currents; a sailing triumphantly, in spite of all obstacles, in the very teeth of the wind; not the lazy drift of a tethered bark accumulating barnacles! I am dying of ennui! Oh, for one hour of excitement! This accursed boredom is rotting my brain—it is, for a fact, —you needn't look incredulous,—I can feel it here," and he placed his right hand at the back of his head.

A long-drawn "H-m-m!" was all the answer the doctor vouchsafed for some moments; then he said quickly, matching eyes with his patient:

"James, what is it?"

Mr. Moreton was taken a bit off his guard, as the other had intended. The blood mounted momentarily to his normally pallid face, and then the red wave rolled back and covered its path with ashes. His gaze, however, remained firm and unflinching.

"Never mind causes; let us confine ourselves to results, or say, if you must have a history of my condition, that I am afraid I stand to lose that for which I would barter my very soul," he said, with an impulsiveness utterly foreign to his nature. "I must have something to divert my mind,—some excitement——"

"—I have it!" exclaimed his companion. "Just the thing for you. Most exciting pursuits are dispersive and disorganising, but this is just the reverse. You have only to go to your club——"

"Ye gods! Would the man send me to the grave to increase my vitality?" Moreton interrupted. "'Club,' a splendid name, if they'd but make it plural. There'd be some reason, then, for every member being a stick. But come! come! come! Out with it! My heavens, man! must I get a laryngoscope and go inside for it?"

"Now, pray calm yourself," said Dr. Carew deprecatingly. "Every time you lose your self-control but makes it the harder for you to retain it, on the next occasion. There! Now I can tell you that the diversion I would recommend to you is a game in which at college you showed great skill,—the game of chess."

"'Good king of cats'! Chess! Why, that's jackstraws to draw-poker without a limit, and *any kind* of poker—even Old Poker—is sleep itself compared with the gambling of the Stock Exchange. Chess! Ha, ha!"

and he laughed a short, bitter, cynical laugh, the sound of which did not please Dr. Carew. "If you had advised me to hold up a train and get a sheriff's posse hot on my trail, that would be something like! Now there's the murderer, Calstro, out there in Indiana,—he's getting excitement. I'd change places with him for the half of a sweated rap! Think of it! Police and detectives on every side, and he, expecting as the fellow said, that every moment will be his next, matching his wits against the whole 'bunch,' outwitting them all, and working with every sort of clever crookedness, steadily toward the seaboard, just as a squirrel in a field, when pursued by a cat, runs a course as jagged as lightning, every elbow of which, however, brings it a bit nearer the coveted stonewall. Now, that's excitement! I'd like that! I say, Henry, suppose I make 'way with you, and then have a run for it with the police? Wouldn't that be sport,—for me, at least? I'll bet you I'd fool them! What do you say? Is't a go?" and again he laughed that little, hard, niggardly, staccato laugh that was not good to hear.

"James!" and the doctor spoke severely; "I beseech you, banish such thoughts forever from your mind, now and here. They will do you no good, and may much harm. If the greed of commercialism has had this effect upon you, let me urge you for your own sake, as well as for that of others, to abjure business altogether, and——"

"—And enter the ministry!" laughed Moreton. "No, Henry, it won't do. I'm here to see the game out, and you must help me over this 'bunch.' If you won't give me the excitement I need, you must at least take away my craving for it. You must——"

"No, James, no! Not that!" exclaimed Dr. Carew.

"But I say yes!" and James Moreton looked him

full in the face. "It won't be the first time I've had it, you know."

"Alas, no!" said the doctor with deep emotion. "I did what I thought best on that first occasion, but I now see the mistake I made, and I tell you, once for all, James, I will never, never repeat that error again!"

Dr. Carew's fine face was very pale as he said this, and determination was writ large in every feature. His companion looked at him steadily, in fact fairly looked him out of countenance. When the doctor's eyes dropped Moreton said:

"Let us talk of other things," and forthwith he returned to the same theme.

"You remember I once did you a service when we were in college together. I have always thought you appreciated that. Well, now *I* want a lift. If I knew the ingredients of that mixture I'd get it myself without troubling you, but I don't, so you must prepare it for me."

"But have I not said——"

"—We have all said things which our friends do well to refuse to accept as final," Moreton interrupted. "You and I know each other well,—or at least we used to,—and I think we can afford to be entirely candid, can we not?"

"Yes?" said the doctor, putting his declaration in interrogative form.

He noted, with some surprise, the external change which had come over his companion, but he did not miss the suppressed excitement underneath it all.

"It's struck in like measles," he said to himself, "and that's worse than before."

"You would not wish me to repent the good turn I did you, would you?" asked Moreton.

"No! No, indeed!" exclaimed the doctor in a tone that left no doubt of its entire sincerity.

"It's only to help me over this 'bunch,' you know;—to give me a chance to pull myself together. Shall I send to your office for it after lunch, or will you send it to me here?"

"James——"

"—There is no other question. Here or there?" and the young financier gave him an impatient and somewhat unpleasant look.

"I will bring it here, but I shall do so against my best judgment, and you must not forget that you took this affair into your own hands, as you are always so prone to do."

"You spoke of some business," suggested Moreton.

"It can wait," the other replied.

"You will be here directly after *lunch?*"

"Directly after *lunch.* Good-morning," and Dr. Carew left the office in rather a depressed state of mind, if appearances were to be trusted. Physicians are wont to have their advice sought with solicitude, and followed with accuracy, hence it were but natural that the very unusual course pursued by his patient should somewhat nettle the good doctor. Then, too, it is not altogether pleasant to have old favours thrown in one's face, especially after one has ceased to need helpful consideration. It must be admitted, also, that James Moreton and Henry Carew were men who had but little in common. The former was a type of the baldest commercialism,—the latter, a man of wide sympathies and tender emotions; the one hopelessly egoistic, the other decidedly altruistic. Dr. Carew was beloved wherever he was intimately known, and many a poor woman without means to buy even food, to say nothing of medicine, had, after one of his visits, found

his bill, in the shape of a closely folded ten-dollar note, hidden under some article upon her table, and had blessed him ever after. His early acquaintance with James Moreton was not the result of any propinquity of disposition, or community of thought, but was rather the outgrowth of purely accidental relations.—The driving of badly mismated pairs is one of Dame Nature's oldest solecisms.

. . . . .

Something like a month after the interview just narrated George Maitland sat with James Moreton in that gentleman's office. George had called to see him some half-dozen times of late, only to be told on each occasion:

"Mr. Moreton has not been in to-day, sir."

At last, however, persistence had been rewarded.

Maitland and Moreton had been talking for a long time about the persons whose names composed the three lists the latter had furnished, when Maitland said abruptly:

"Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Moreton, that these threatening letters might be merely intended to worry you, or perhaps to force you to conceal your identity by a change of residence?"

"I have, indeed, thought of it as a *possibility*, but it does not impress me as being at all likely," he replied.

"But what other motive can you even imagine?" George asked. "Take this, for example," and he took a letter from a little pile of papers before him on the table and read:

"'Philadelphia, Dec. 20, 19—.

"'Mr. James Moreton,
"'10th Floor, Johnston Bldg.,
"'New York City.

"'Sir: The hour approaches. Your doom is sealed. An army of detectives could not save you. Compose your wicked soul, repent your sins, and prepare to die. Escape is impossible. *You are a marked man!*

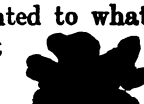
"'Nemesis.'

"Now what can you make of that? You see the fellow knows you have employed a detective,—at least he seems to,—yet he thinks this office is on the tenth floor. It doesn't look, you see, much as if he had followed you very closely. Now can't you think of someone who wishes you to leave New York,—someone who would be a gainer were you to go away?"

"Oh, yes! There are several who could manage their affairs much more to their liking if James Eldredge Moreton would obligingly decamp. Just now the bulls on the Exchange would bellow themselves hoarse if I and my bears would go into concealment and hibernate for a few weeks. Then there is a fair lady—but there! that is for you to find out, if you have not already done so.—The part of that letter which to my mind negatives all your suspicions you have not read."

"Indeed?" said Maitland. "And what is that?"

Mr. Moreton took up the letter and pointed to what seemed a blot of ink near the signature. It was like this, only somewhat larger:



"Did you not notice that?" he asked.

"What, that accidental blot?"

"It is not a blot—neither is it accidental," said Moreton.

"Now that I search it closely, the edges do look a bit hard and set," rejoined Maitland, placing a magnifying glass over the blackened area. "As I live!" he exclaimed. "The outlines were carefully traced with a pen and were subsequently filled in with ink. Truly, a most singular proceeding!"

"Now look at this letter from Washington. Is not that the same hieroglyph? I marvel that you did not notice that the same character is upon every letter I have shown you."

"I think almost anyone," said Maitland, "would call

it a blot of ink, and let it go at that. Of course, when we note that the shape is the same in all cases, and that it occurs in the letters printed upon a typewriter, as well as in those written with a pen, we at once perceive that it is the result of design, rather than of accident. Does it not look to you as if someone were trying not only to alarm, but to mystify you,—to keep your mind stirred up, your attention diverted from your more serious concerns,—by this hieroglyph? You do not, of course, attach any meaning to this cabalistic daub?"

"On the contrary, I do," replied Moreton with unmistakable assurance. "There is a weapon in the police archives at Washington which has this same figure damascened into its blade. I have never seen it but once, but here is a cut of it," and he spread before Maitland an age-yellowed and much-worn newspaper clipping. George glanced at the picture and then said:

"And this dagger is——"

But something in Moreton's manner caused him to pause and look the young man in the face. He was strangely moved, and his countenance wore that same, unforgettable look which Maitland had noted at the death of Juliet on the night of Miss Sherwood's debut, and yet again a few hours later at the banquet.

"It is—the weapon—which—killed my—father!" he said, with such an effort at self-control as was painful to witness.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Maitland. "I see now why you attach such importance to this cabalistic figure. But look at it from all sides. Can you not see that it all makes toward my theory that these threats are merely idle attempts to worry and mystify you? Here is this hieroglyph in every letter, and it now appears that

the same figure had some connection with your sad bereavement many years ago. Naturally, your first thought is that those who slew your father, or their agents, now menace you. But look at it a moment. Were such actually the case, would they be obliging enough to notify you in advance, on the one hand, and on the other to identify themselves as your father's assassins by this heiroglyph? I say 'they,' because this article states conclusively that at least two men were concerned in your father's murder. No, I think you may rest easy in one of two beliefs. Either the writer of these letters,—for I see no evidence that they are the work of more than one person,—except possibly the diversity in the handwriting, which does not impress me as conclusive,—either this writer, I say, is crazy, or he, or she, as the case may be, is writing these missives for the purpose of annoying you, and perhaps with the hope of driving you from New York. The letters do not seem to me to be the work of a disordered mind, for reasons which you yourself have doubtless divined. What, then, is left? This: they were probably written by someone who either enjoys, or otherwise profits by, your discomfort."

"But the hieroglyph, you are forgetting that!" exclaimed Mr. Moreton in a tone in which Maitland thought he detected a shade of disgust.

"On the contrary, no," George replied. "That all makes toward my theory. This peculiar figure was published in the papers at the time of your father's death. Thousands of people saw it. Its use in these letters merely shows that the missives emanate from someone acquainted with that much, at least, of your family's tragic experience, and who is disposed to make the most of it. Can you not see it in this light?"

"I had not thought of it in that way before," More-

ton replied. "Perhaps you are right after all.—Let us hope so, at all events."

The words were fairly compliant to Maitland's views, but that gentleman was sure he detected something in the tone in which they were uttered which indicated a firm adherence, on Mr. Moreton's part, to his original belief.

"If you please," Maitland said, "I will take these letters with me. I would like to examine them more carefully," and he arose to go.

When Maitland had left the office his client sat motionless for several minutes, immersed in thought. And George would not have felt flattered had he known what was passing through the mind of this young captain of industry.

"And this is their wonderful detective!" he exclaimed in half-audible disgust. "He took the mysterious figure for an ink-blot, and did not even notice, until I called his attention to it, that the same character occurred in the same portion of each letter. Huh! I could do better than that, myself! And he thinks he has made me believe someone is merely playing a practical joke upon me. Bah!"

Yet in every particular of his critique this astute young man was in error. Never for a moment had Maitland mistaken the inexplicable figure for an ink-blot. He had perceived at the very first glance the hardness of its outline, and had remarked the abrased surface of the interior, where the pen-point had roughened the wet paper, in laying the flat tone. Neither had he fallen into any of those errors which he had thought best to allow the young financier to impute to him. George Maitland had his own method of conducting a case.

CHAPTER VI

The so-called weakness of woman is but another kind of strength. In the divided household, conjugal palmistry ably opposes to the *thenar eminence* of the husband's hand the more potent little finger of his wife's. It is a case of power *versus* subtlety, and, upon rare occasions, of power against subtlety *and* power.

"I WISH once more, Marie, to try to arrive at an amicable settlement of our differences."

The speaker was Mr. James Eldredge Moreton, and the person addressed, Mrs. Hortense Marie Moreton, who had just been summoned into her husband's presence.

A soft-coal fire smoked and smouldered in the study grate, and the chilly atmosphere seemed to lend a cutting-edge to the gloom and the darkness which pervaded the sumptuously furnished apartment. One could have told, without leaving the room, that it was a mansion-study intended to narcotise, rather than stimulate, thought.

The lady advanced slowly to the fire and seated herself by it, but vouchsafed no word of reply. The man, in order to enliven the fire,—or possibly to revive his all-but-forgotten gallantry toward this woman,—seized the poker, and kneeling before the grate, made vicious little rapier-like jabs at the blackening embers, while he awaited with what patience he could command the reply of the stately woman before him. Did he remember the time,—not long since,—when his very soul was on its knees before this beautiful woman? Probably not. The masculine brain has but a thin memory for such details.

"We have discussed this all many times before, James," Mrs. Moreton said at length, "and I do not find that I have anything to add to what I have already said. If *you* have something new to offer, I will listen in patience, though the subject is naturally a painful one, —to me at least."

The words were uttered in a soft, velvety voice, full of a subtle pathos, as if their breath raised the corner of a shroud under which something very dear lay dead. The most captious ear would have caught no note of anger or resentment. When she had finished she awaited, with hands loosely folded in her lap, her lord's reply, and king, indeed, should he have been, if appearances are trustworthy, for the woman looked every inch a queen. Her rich, olive skin, her lustrous eyes, and her wealth of dark hair added to her regal pose, and those subtle, elusory evidences of dignity, which seem to form a sort of intangible astral body to true womanhood, gave her the appearance of a Zenobia in modern gown and coiffure.

There was a suggestion of diffidence in the man's manner as he began to speak.

"You know, Marie," he said, "that our relations are becoming daily more strained, and—well—I have made up my mind that we had better part, once for all."

He paused for her reply, but she remained silent, and he was forced to continue somewhat awkwardly.

"I am willing to do the right thing, you know, and give,—that is, if you will do as I want,—and give you enough to—to handsomely maintain you."

Again he waited for her to say something which should make his task easier, but again she remained patiently silent, and he was forced to renew the subject unaided.

"I should wish you to leave New York, and—and you would, I think, probably prefer to do so, as you would

most likely feel somewhat sensitive regarding the publicity. Of course, in a locality where you are not known this feeling would not be a factor in the matter. You see, I desire a complete separation, and——"

"—Say, rather, you wish your freedom," quietly replied the woman, speaking now where he least expected it.

"Put it that way, if you prefer," he said with a slight inclination of the head. "I wish my freedom. If you will assist me, I can get it more quickly, and with far less annoyance to both of us. If you contest my suit, I shall still accomplish my purpose, but through means most unpleasant to both of us—particularly to you."

"And your proposition is?"

"That I sue for divorce."

"Upon what grounds?"

"That you have been untrue to your marriage vows."

"And you would name as co-respondent?"

"Elbert Reiss."

It was with a visible effort that the woman continued:

"And if I consent—if I do not contest?"

"Five thousand a year for life."

A shade swept over the pale and rigid face. He noted it and thought it an ill omen.

"And if I refuse?"

"I shall prove my case and you will get nothing,—nothing but the shame of being dragged through a filthy court."

"And you would have me acknowledge an offence of which I am innocent?"

"It is merely a business proposition. I am not to blame that idiots make our laws. You say I want my freedom; very good. How am I to get it? By proving you faithless."

"But I am not, and you know it!"

"Very likely, but I can prove it, nevertheless, and that is quite sufficient."

"What! You tell me you can prove such a falsehood as that?"

"Nothing easier, I assure you. It is the *truth* which is hard to prove in a court of—'justice,'—I believe they call it."

"And if I refuse you will adopt this infamous course?"

"The law, which has been defined as 'Common sense made mandatory,' and as 'Beneficence acting by rule'! leaves me, I regret to say, no alternative. I am its creature, and must attain my ends in compliance with its dictates."

"And you would perjure yourself? You——"

"—Nothing of the sort. I should merely summon as witnesses those who could—and would—prove your guilt."

The woman arose and the man did likewise. She made her way with slow grace to the door. Her husband followed her part of the distance.

"May I not have your decision now?" he asked.

She turned and looked him squarely and calmly in the face for a long time before she answered. It seemed to him as if her eyes sank to the depths of his soul, like pebbles in a pool, and he felt abashed at what he feared their flaming brilliance might discover.

"As well now as any time," she replied in a low, firm voice, the meaning of which he knew full well. "You, who should be my natural protector, have asked me to become a party to the defamation of my own character. You have offered to purchase the good name of your wife that you may throw it, like a bone, to the wolf-pack of scandal. You wish your freedom, not because your marriage vows have ever been permitted

to curtail what you would call your 'liberty,' but because the woman you now covet has, unlike most of your attractions, some respect for the ordinary conventionalities of society.—I understand, you see. You, to whom I should be able to fly for refuge from the slightest breath of calumny, constitute yourself my gravest menace—my most imminent peril. As if you were my czar, instead of my husband, you have handed me your ultimatum, and have asked for an immediate reply."

She paused as if to afford him an opportunity to speak, should he desire it, but he held his peace. Every syllable his wife uttered cut him like a knife. There was neither anger nor indignation in her tone. He could have borne that easily, but back of this calm, deep, level utterance, as dispassionate as the Last Judgment, he felt an unutterable depth of loathing which shattered that self-respect which is the soul's looking-glass, as a stone shivers a mirror. With all his self-sufficiency he felt himself shrivelling in her august presence. A telepathic instinct told him that this woman regarded him as a loathsome reptile upon whose head she would promptly have set her heel but for a sickening aversion to contact with a thing so leprously unclean. He marshalled the last vassal of his courage,—and it was no mean retinue,—to receive the answer of the one being he had ever met whose superior temper could turn the edge of his own damascene will.

Doom has no aftermath; hence its shadows precede it.

"And now this ultimatum," continued the woman, with measured calmness. "Unless I consent, my good name is to be taken from me through hired perjury, and my disgrace is to be blazoned forth to all the world. This, then, is my answer: For you and your proposition I have no characterisation that I dare trust to

words. I will speak later in deeds. For the rest, I have only to say that I shall defeat your wishes,—and prevent your divorce. I can prove all the particulars of that all-night 'political rally' which you attended on the third of last March,—and that, too, without resort to perjury. I shall, of course, suffer greatly in the opinion others have of me, but were I to succumb to intimidation I should suffer in my own opinion of myself, which is *infinitely worse*. I know with whom I have to deal,—that the struggle will be to the death. So be it! I make my choice now and here. I shall ask no quarter, and you will give none."

"You are making the mistake of your life!" he almost shouted. "You will lose both yourself and your cause! I will make you regret your decision to your dying day!"

She advanced a step nearer to him and looked him squarely in the eyes. The faintest semblance of a smile played about her pale lips as she replied, still holding his gaze enmeshed in hers:

"Has Hortense Merriam so changed in becoming Mrs. Moreton?—I do not wish to hand back your threats, for I have none to offer you, but I will make you this prophecy:"—and her face was the face of Sichel's Medea—"you will never live to get that divorce. Good-night!" and she turned and left the apartment.

The prediction struck the man with set claws which held fast in his conviction,—yet it altered not his course "in the estimation of a hair."

CHAPTER VII

"The Inexplicable" is a favourite *alias* of "The Unexplained." The assumption that what we cannot understand cannot *be* understood comes easy to us, for the simple reason that the wish plays father to the thought, and "saves the face" of our vanity.

THE curious hieroglyph to which James Moreton fondly believed Maitland attached but little or no importance produced such a ferment in this latter gentleman's mind that he could not get the matter even momentarily out of his thoughts. He felt, yet for the life of him he could not have told why, that he was engaged in what was to prove the most singular and interesting case which had ever come to his attention. The more he thought upon the subject the deeper grew this conviction within him.

As a young man he had read law and had during his residence in Boston been admitted to the bar. He now determined immediately to take steps to put himself upon a similar legal footing in New York,—a result in achieving which he found no difficulty.

Almost as soon as he had taken charge of Mr. Moreton's case he had gotten himself appointed as a special officer, so that he now considered himself ready, as far as might be,—for what the enemy had in store for him. To say that he had formed any definite theory in regard to the Moreton case would be to misrepresent the facts. He had acquainted himself with all the persons named in the three lists furnished him, only to find himself much more attracted to Mr. Moreton's supposed enemies than to those whom that gentleman regarded as his friends.

He said on one occasion, while discussing the matter with Dr. Willard:

"I tell you what, Doc, the cream of my New York acquaintance is on Moreton's blacklist. If I were to edit these three lists of enemies, doubtfuls and friends, the first thing I should do would be to head them respectively, 'The Elect,' 'The Unregenerate,' and 'The Damned.'"

. . . . .

"Yes, I have received several other threatening letters since I gave you the last," said Moreton. "Here is one from Columbus, Ohio, and here another from Buffalo," and he handed them to Maitland. "There is the same old hieroglyph, you see."

"Have you any theory as to how it happens," Maitland asked, "that so many of these letters,—particularly those more recently received,—show by their postmarks that they were mailed in different cities?—I mean, of course, have you any idea why they should be so mailed?"

"No, unless to impress me with the futility of attempting to catch this troublesome flea," said Moreton lightly. "Perhaps he thinks to make me believe I am the victim of a wide-spread organisation. You see the signatures are all different, and also the handwriting where a pen was used. Would not that be a plausible explanation? Of course, the fellow may be travelling about, and may simply be consulting his own convenience. You see, I have adopted your theory that it is all merely an attempt to annoy me, without any intention of inflicting any direct bodily injury."

"Ah, I am glad to hear that!" exclaimed Maitland. "It will be much better for your health and comfort to regard the whole affair in that light."

"Indeed, I have found it so already," said Moreton

with much earnestness. "I do not believe anyone who knows me would call me a coward, yet I must confess that the conviction that around every corner, and in the depth of every shadow, might lurk assassins, watching their opportunity to strike me as they did my father, was beginning to unnerve me a bit. I felt sure at first that these letters were the result of that desire, so common to self-constituted avengers, to let their victim know whence came the blow that struck him. To kill, without first disclosing their identity, would seem to them like eating the shell and throwing away the meat of vengeance.

"I knew this and was unduly influenced by it, till I asked myself why an elaborately bungling attempt should be made, ostensibly to inform me of my enemy's identity, while, at the same time, the means chosen for conveying this information were such as would more likely than not be entirely misunderstood. Why, in short, a painstaking and laborious ambiguity, instead of an easy and simple certainty? Then I thought of what you had said, and the absurdity of my former fears was borne in upon me with renewed vigour."

"Indeed, I think your reasoning does you much credit," Maitland replied. "I will keep these letters with the others, if you don't mind. In the meantime we will not relax our vigilance."

"By the way, to change the subject," said Moreton, "I have to go over to Jersey City this afternoon; why not come along with me? Of course, I can't explain our device to the last gasp as its inventor can, but I'll do what I can for you in that line."

"I'd be delighted to go," said George.

"All right; excuse me a moment. I've only to call up a party on the 'phone, and to tell Mr. Bertram where I can be found if needed, and then I'll be with you.

There's a morning paper," and he left the room, to return again almost immediately. "Now we'll be off," he said, and with this remark they left the office *en route* for Jersey City.

. . . . .

When they reached the Jersey terminal of the ferry Moreton said:

"Our telephone station is a good two miles from here. If you don't feel like taking the walk, we can get a car here which will carry us within a short distance of our destination. I hate cars, they seem so slow and poky, so I usually walk when I come alone. Not that I make as good time as the cars, but it gives me a sense of being busy."

"I would very much prefer to walk," Maitland replied. "The air is clear and cold, and it is just beginning to snow. Nothing suits me better than to be out in a whirling snow-storm."

"All right, then, walk it is," Moreton rejoined, leading off at a good pace. "This is our road. Don't hesitate to tell me if I go too fast for you. It seems to me as if the score of my existence were marked with but the one direction, '*Allegro molto*,' repeated at every line. Hurry is my natural state,—a whirlwind my habitat. Do you believe in a literal hell? Ordinarily, of course, *I* don't, but there are times when I feel so like it that I can't, for the life of me, doubt its existence.—I think this is a 'ragtime' age, anyway. Everybody seems striving to work in a redundant beat which God never intended should jig the reasonable into the ridiculous."

"I heartily endorse that sentiment!" exclaimed Maitland earnestly. "We swallow life so fast we cannot taste it."

James Moreton gave a little shiver by way of reply.

It was almost dark and snowing rapidly when the two men turned down a side street which had the appearance of having been reclaimed from the sea. The few age-discoloured, decrepit and ramshackle buildings which defaced the street at wide intervals trembled at the bite of winter like decayed tushes loose in the jaws of a hag.

"I suppose you wonder why I chose such an out-of-the-way place as this for our New Jersey headquarters," said Moreton in a half-apologetic tone. "I had a good reason for it, I assure you. I suppose that every man has ideals of some sort or other; at any rate I have mine, and I fully believe that the finest specimen of clear-cut, cold-blooded business the world has thus far produced is John D. Rockefeller. They may talk about their 'good-enough Morgans' till Russell Sage takes a summer outing, but my slogan is 'good-enough-Rockefeller.' It was in emulation of Standard-Oil methods that I located over here. You know, I dare say, how the Standard used to hold its stockholders' meetings in an all but inaccessible loft, where the shareholders were unable to find it? Well, that is precisely the scheme I am adopting. What's good enough for Rockefeller's good enough for me. It's a great nuisance to have every two-cent shareholder coming around nosing into your business at every meeting, and the Standard and I have known occasions where it would have been even worse than inconvenient. Ha! Ha! The widows and orphans will have a run for their money finding us here, eh?" and Mr. James Eldredge Moreton seemed more than pleased with his commercial astuteness.

"I say——"

But Mr. Moreton did not complete the sentence!

Two men sprang from the shadow of one of the tumble-

down sheds and assailed him. The athletic young financier instantly throttled the smaller of his two assailants, and, for a moment, it seemed as if he would make short work of him. All this, however, quickly changed when the larger ruffian seized Moreton from behind and raised aloft a dagger to plunge it in his back. So quickly was it done that Maitland had barely time to seize the would-be assassin's descending arm. This burly individual seemed quite taken aback at this sudden interference. With some sort of an oath, uttered in a language which Maitland did not understand, he promptly released his hold of Moreton in order that he might bestow his entire attention upon Maitland.

The struggle over the weapon was short and terrific, and ended by Maitland forcing his combatant to drop into the snow. Then the nature of the conflict changed, and the larger man assumed the offensive with great vigour. He tore himself free from Maitland's grasp and with a quick spring seized him by the throat with such adroitness that it was impossible to elude his grasp. As the muscular fingers of both his hands closed about his windpipe Maitland felt sure that his hour had come. Under the stimulus of approaching death all his faculties preternaturally quickened. Nothing seemed too small, too insignificant, to attract his attention.

He observed how his assailant held him with bent arms, and he made the mental note that this man was no novice in the "gentle art" of garroting. In vain did George strive to induce him to straighten his arms, so that he might break one of them by a sharp, upward blow beneath the elbow.—He was apparently guarding against just such treatment. The bent position of the larger man's arms brought the combatants' faces close together, and Maitland noted, even in the fading light, the dark, swarthy skin of his antagonist, and his heavy,

protruding jaw,—clean-shaven, like the thin, tightly drawn lips above it,—in all its ugliness. He even noted a peculiar odour, but could not remember that he had ever smelled anything like it before. Then he began to realise that, despite his assailant's grip, he was able to get some breath, else he could not have smelled anything.

Glancing momentarily downward, some marks upon the back of the hands which held him attracted his attention. More careful inspection assured Maitland that they were designs tattooed into the skin. One figure in particular fastened itself upon his mind, and caused him to give such a start as attracted his assailant's notice. It was upon the back of the left hand, and was the self-same hieroglyph he had found in all the threatening letters, and had seen upon Romeo's dagger.

Such an effect did this astounding discovery produce upon him that, for the moment, he forgot his own danger in contemplation of its tremendous significance, and even half relaxed his hold upon his antagonist's wrists. A tightening of the fingers about his throat, however, brought him quickly to himself, and caused him to make renewed efforts to escape. The whole struggle had not lasted a minute, yet already he felt himself growing weak and dizzy from the partial strangulation, and knew that he should soon fall unless he could loosen the grasp about his throat. Summoning all his strength he quickly bent his body away from his assailant and, swinging his right leg with his utmost vigour, he drove his knee viciously into the larger man's abdomen. A groan followed the sickening thud: then the hands left Maitland's throat, and his assailant staggered as if about to fall, but succeeded in keeping his feet, much to Maitland's surprise, for he had expected his blow would be all but fatal.

For a moment the burly ruffian stood irresolutely, as if undecided whether or not to renew his attack. When, however, he noted that Moreton had put his "pal" to flight, he turned and ran heavily down the street in a direction opposite that taken by his accomplice.

"Come, let's give chase!" cried Moreton.

The fugitive had a very considerable start of his pursuers, yet it soon became evident that he would be quickly overtaken. Several passers-by, attracted by Moreton's cry of "Stop him! Stop him!" joined in the chase, and the result seemed a foregone conclusion, when suddenly the fugitive vaulted a high board fence, and struck diagonally across a vacant lot toward a little shanty standing by itself upon the farther corner. Moreton and Maitland, who had followed a "leader" on more than one occasion before, quickly jumped the fence and continued the chase, but the less athletic pursuers had to "boost" and pull each other over. It was snowing hard and, had the fugitive been able to put any considerable distance between himself and his pursuers, they would have been unable to see him. Inasmuch, however, as he had plunged into a vacant lot where the new-fallen snow was virgin, it would even then have been physically impossible for him to conceal his whereabouts. Moreton and Maitland could not have been a hundred feet behind him when he reached the little shanty, plunged through its narrow entrance, and slammed the door to behind him. Maitland heard the bolt slip, and wondered if the fellow expected to stand a siege.

"There—now—we've—got him!" exclaimed Moreton, panting from his exertion.

"This is the only door," said Maitland, "and there is but the one window here at this corner. I will stand here where I can command both it and the door. If we

station a man at each of the other three corners no one can possibly leave the place unobserved."

They promptly acted upon this suggestion, and posted sentries at the corners with instructions to shout should any attempt to escape be made within their field of vision. Then Moreton beat upon the door and called loudly:

"Here, you! open up there!"

No answer rewarding his efforts, he renewed his demand with added emphasis.

"I say, there! Open this door, and be d——d quick about it! Do you hear?"

"What's all this fuss about?" came in a thin voice through the closed door.

"It's about done, my fine assassin!" replied Moreton, sarcastically.

"Go away! Leave me in peace!" came from within.

"Dear me, we've 'jugged' an anchorite!" said Moreton to the bystanders, "only he doesn't know that 'Depart in peace' is the usual formula."

"We'll leave you in pieces if we don't get you pretty quick," he shouted at the door.

"What business have you with me?"

"'Cut it out,' we're not babes in arms! Open the door, I say!"

"And I say, friend, depart in peace, while there is still nothing to regret."

"Now by all the gods at once! did anyone ever hear the like of that? Once more, will you open that door?"

"Certainly, friend, if you can give me any good reason for doing it."

For a moment Moreton was too disgusted to reply, and Maitland utilised the lull in affairs to send a boy for an officer.

"You know why we want the door opened, you cant-

ing hypocrite. Your 'friend' loves you so he wants to fall upon your neck—and break it! Is that reason enough?"

The only reply which this question elicited was the following, sung in a thin, high-pitched whining nasal:

"'There are angels a-hov'rin' 'round; there are angels a-hov'rin' 'round.'"

This was too much for Moreton's overtaxed patience.

"Stand away!" he said, to those gathered about the doorway, as he stepped back a few yards; "I'm going to pay that psalm-singing hypocrite a visit, right now," and he gathered himself up for a rush at the door.

"Wait a moment!" shouted Maitland from his post near the corner.

"Let us be patient and do the job in regular form. I've an idea that what you propose doing is exactly what our captive wants, and that before you could pick yourself up, he would succeed in doing to you that which he has already once failed to accomplish; however, be that as it may, there is no reason why we should take any unnecessary chances. I wear the badge of a special officer, yet I have preferred to send for a regular policeman, since I could do so just as well as not. He will soon be here, and I advise, if there be any breaking and entering necessary, that we let him do it."

"I suppose that's good counsel," said Moreton with some reluctance, "but I *would* like to jump into the middle of that sweet song. However, I'll wait, as you suggest."

The officer soon arrived and the whole affair was carefully detailed to him.

"Are you sure he went in here?" he asked.

"Absolutely," replied Maitland. "We were close to him and saw him when he entered. You can see by the

trail in the snow that he came right here. There are no foot-prints anywhere in the field except those that lead straight to this shanty."

"Are you sure you can identify your man?" asked the officer.

"Yes, among a thousand," Maitland replied. "He's too big to mistake easily, and I'd know his jaw among a million."

"All right, then we'll make him come out," and the policeman went to the door, upon which he knocked imperiously.—There was no response.

"Open in the name of the law!" he shouted.

"What do you want?" came in the same thin voice from within.

"We want you. Will you open the door?"

"Yes, I'll open it, but I'm not the man you're after."

"If you're not, he's there with you," shouted Moreton.

"There is no one here but me," came from within.

"Open till we see for ourselves!" demanded the officer.

The bolts were slowly drawn and the door opened about a handbreadth. The officer pressed his shoulder against it and walked in. Maitland and Moreton promptly followed him. There was but the one room, and this gave abundant evidence of the pitiable squalor of its occupant. There was scarcely any furniture, apart from a little, low, cylindrical cast-iron stove which stood in the right farther corner, and a cot, littered with rags, which extended along the back wall of the apartment with its foot to the little stove. Old boxes did duty for chairs, and a tall packing-case served as a table. There was no floor, much less carpet upon the room. Not even a loose board protected the foot from direct contact with the cold, damp, black earth. A smoky little hand-lamp, and the thin glare which came

through the cracks of the broken stove, furnished the only light there was. In a corner upon a broken box was a wash pail and beside it a bit of soap and a rag of a towel, the latter so black with use that the imagination could not picture it as ever having been white.

As might be imagined, the odour of the place was anything but agreeable, yet despite its rich bouquet of flowers of filth, Maitland detected a persistent and rather pleasant smell which he could not remember ever to have smelled before. He was sure it was not the same odour he had so recently detected upon his assailant's person.

Crouched in the corner by the stove was the object of their search.

"Come up here and let's have a look at you!" said the officer.

The bent figure straightened itself stiffly, slowly arose, and shambled forward. It was very tall, gaunt, angular, bearded, and free from all tattoo marks.

"Is that your man?" asked the policeman.

"No," replied Maitland promptly. "My assailant was fleshy, with clean-shaven face, heavy, projecting jaw, and tattooed hands. This man is thin, bearded, has a weak and retreating lower jaw, and no tattoo marks. We may as well drop him as out of the question, and find where he's hidden the other fellow."

"It won't take long to search this 'joint,' I reckon," replied the officer.

"I tell you there is no one else here," said the tenant of the shanty, seating himself sullenly upon the cot.

"Yes, so you say," replied Moreton; "but, incomprehensible as it may seem to you, we are believing our own eyes in preference to your word."

"Get up and let us ransack that pile of rags you are sitting on. There's a big rascal here somewhere with

a smooth face and a villainously heavy jaw, and we're going to have him or know the reason why." In less than a minute the examination of everything above ground was complete—and not a solitary thing in the least suspicious had been found! Maitland took nothing for granted, even minutely examining the roof, inside and out, and satisfying himself as to the thickness of the walls, and their inability to afford the slightest concealment.

"Bring the lamp and let us see if there is any hiding-place below ground," he said.

It took but the merest glance to show that the earthen floor was continuous and had not been disturbed for months.

"Well, what do you say?" asked the officer.

"Wait here a moment," replied Maitland, "and then I'll answer your question."

He left the shanty, made a wide circle around it and returned to answer the policeman.

"Outside," he said, "less than a hundred feet away, there is, as you know, an arc light which illuminates all the area about this place. We have posted sentries so as to render it impossible for anyone to leave this building, even if he could pass through a blind-wall, without being quickly detected in such a light. Everyone on guard is positive no man has left this shanty. I have just made a complete detour which perfectly corroborates this testimony, for there is not a foot-print to be seen save those we ourselves have made. I am sure, therefore, that he has not left this building—unless indeed by some occult or magical means. I have heard of such things occurring in India, but have never believed the stories. We followed the fugitive closely, and I would stake my life he entered here. There can be no possible doubt upon *that* score. Equally sure am I that

he is not here now, for this fellow cannot be he, and we have assured ourselves there is no one else here. This is my view of the case. Not very lucid, I admit, and full of inconsistencies, but you will have to take it for what it is worth. For myself, I am going to look a bit farther into the theory of n-dimensional space; for if this chap didn't pass out of here in the direction of the fourth dimension, I would be most pleased to be informed how he *did* escape—unless, of course, we were merely chasing his astral body. Ha! Ha! I have seen some queer things before, but I shall forget them all after this," and George Maitland wore a decidedly troubled look.

All men are more or less superstitious, but Maitland was certainly as free from that universal taint as any person one would be likely to meet in a day's journey. He had met irreconcilable axioms in philosophy; but here were two mutually annihilating certainties *in the concrete.* His assailant must be in the shanty, yet just as surely he was not there. It was useless for him to try to convince himself that the thin, lank, bearded individual with the receding lower jaw was his assailant. He knew better than to place so slight a value upon his powers of observation. He was entirely nonplussed, and he frankly acknowledged it.

"If this isn't the man," said the officer, "I don't see that we have any further business here. One thing is certain: no one else is concealed here. I guess your eyes must have played you false," and he winked knowingly at the by-standers.

"I don't wonder you think so," replied Maitland good-naturedly. "The mystery is that I can't make myself believe it," and he led the way to the door.

"I have it!" exclaimed Moreton, turning back just as he reached the entrance. "That fellow there is your

man as sure as preaching! The beard which so troubles you is false, I'll bet a hundred dollars!"

No one took the wager.

"If what you say is true," ejaculated Maitland, "the major part of the mystery is solved. Bring the light while I examine. It won't take long to find out."

Each held his breath as Maitland approached the suspect and, seizing him by the beard, gave that ornament a sharp twitch. It was rather discourteous treatment, yet the victim took it all in good part, and even smiled at Maitland's chagrin when the hair held fast.

"If you'll pardon the liberty," said George, "I'll pull out a few of those just to convince the sceptical," and he suited the action to the word to the evident discomfort of his victim.

"Gentlemen," he said, turning to his companions, "that growth is the result of nature, not of art. Those," he said, exhibiting the few hairs he had extracted, "are human hairs, bulbs and all, and he came far more legitimately by them than I did. I regret to say there is nothing whatever false about the beard; that it must have taken at least six weeks to grow it; that my assailant was clean-shaven; and—and that the mystery remains as dark and impenetrable as ever."

EPISODE THIRD

The Blow in the Dark

CHAPTER I

It was probably the heart of some captain of industry which first suggested the idea of cold-storage.

It was the latter part of May, and one of those prematurely hot days which Dame Nature occasionally issues as a Sirian threat of dogdays. James Moreton sat at his desk in his shirt sleeves. There was an expression upon his countenance which defies description. Never before had his jaw looked so large, or suggested such cruel ferocity. The asymmetry of his face, usually hardly noticeable, seemed suddenly to have accentuated itself into ugly prominence, and a certain elusive inharmony between the two eyes heightened still further the repulsive effect.

The winter had made a marked change in the man. That hysterical flurry, ferment and flutter wherewith the present hour curses America was uttering with slow patience the first incisive syllables of its awful judgment. Yet James Moreton heard them not, or if he heard, could not or would not heed. Day by day the craving for excitement grew stronger within him, and the old stimuli which once had horripilated his eager daring he now spat from his colourless lips as nauseous, tasteless draughts.

The feverish hell of the Stock Exchange, where the jungle of savagery " red in tooth and claw " seems ever threatening to burst the thin skin of civilisation so tensely strained over it, palled on his overspiced taste as a thing flat, mawkish and insipid. Again and again did Dr. Carew conjure him to adopt a calmer, saner habit of life. It was all in vain. James Eldredge Moreton had been inoculated with the spirit of this com-

mercial age, and that which as yet had but reached a varioloid state in others had already become in his case virulent smallpox. His business competitors prayed God in public that they might never "get it as badly" as he had it, while in private they stuck themselves porcupine-full of commercial vaccine points, in the mad endeavour to at least become scabbed over and pitted into a close imitation of the coveted malady.

He was still the Napoleon of the Exchange, whose brilliant manœuvres nonplussed his cleverest adversaries. Strive how they might, they could never foretell what course he would pursue.

Truth to tell, the very audacity of this young commercial Napoleon was, on many occasions, the determining factor of his success. He was the most dreaded figure on the floor of the Exchange, because of his brilliant, unrelenting, cold-blooded business ferocity, expressed in actions which defied prediction and took precaution by surprise.

As he sat at his desk, however, on this May day, there was something in his appearance which showed only too plainly that he had played a game where to win was to lose. Pale, drawn, and haggard; the pallor of his clean-shaven face exaggerating itself against his black, tightly curled, *almost kinky* hair; his eyes blazing with a shallow glitter that was not good to see, he was an object, at this particular moment, which his dearest enemies would have given much to behold.

The letter before him was not pleasant to contemplate; his chances of winning the one woman who dominated his waking thoughts and filled his sleep with incoherent dreams of a great good lost were far from reassuring; the divorce proceedings which he had instituted against his wife did not promise all that he could hope. The trial was set for the fifteenth of June, and a tantalising

fiend of prophecy within him marked the hour with derision. He had not forgotten his wife's calm prediction, and he knew her far too well to make light of it. She would do all that human decency could do,—he was perfectly assured of that,—and equally certain that it would be sufficient for her ends. Then, too, a soul-suffocating sense of boredom fell like a gladiatorial net upon him, till it seemed as if no stake were big enough, no hazard sufficiently audacious, to make life's game interesting.

James Eldredge Moreton was in one of his depressed moods. In such circumstances many a man would at least have *thought* of suicide. Not so, however, this young autocrat. He might, had a sufficient occasion presented itself, have risked his life as a hazard;—that would have been but an accentuation of the gambling risks he so loved,—but to throw the stakes into the lap of his opponent, without so much as an attempt to contest the issue, would have been too unsportsmanlike a proceeding even to have suggested itself to him.

He picked up the letter and again read the following portion of it:—

"Several months ago my client, Mrs. Clara Haswell, of Evanston, placed in your hands, through me, securities to the amount of $439,560 face value, with instructions that the same be sold and an accounting made to me, as her attorney. I now hold your receipt for the same. Receiving no statement of sale from you I wrote you upon the matter. Your reply, which is before me, asserts that the unpropitious state of the market had caused you, in Mrs. Haswell's interests, to hold the securities in hand for better financial conditions. A month later I again wrote you a similar letter, to which you returned an almost identical reply.

"Learning that your market had fully recovered at least three weeks before the date of your last letter, I wrote you demanding either an immediate accounting or the prompt return of the securities. You replied under date of May 20th, asking for a week's time to complete negotiations, which you stated were then in progress, looking toward a most advantageous sale of the entire consignment. This request I granted, only to find in the

meantime that all of my client's securities were sold by you on or before May 15th current.

"In view of these facts, sir, I take this opportunity to inform you that unless I receive from you a complete accounting on or before June 12th next, I shall, in my client's interests, take legal measures to procure the same.

"I remain yours, etc.,

"WILFRED TUTTLE."

This letter was dated Chicago, May 26th, 19——, and had been received in the morning's mail.

James Moreton turned it face downward and pressed an electric button at the right of his desk.

"Charles," he said to the clerk who responded, "I want to see just where my affairs stand. Let me have a statement of my account at the Shoe and Leather and at the Trust Co. Bring it to me at once."

He made his request without raising his eyes from his desk, and did not, therefore, detect the sudden pallor which swept like a wave over Charles Bertram's usually ruddy face.

"Charlie Bert," as "the boys" called him, was a "sport" among sports, but that was not all. He was possessed of a facility in many things which led his friends to say, "Mr. Bertram is a 'genius.'" Or, to follow the vernacular of some of the more racy of them with religious thoroughness, "Charlie's a 'gene,' that's what he is."

He played a game of chess, his friends said, that on more than one occasion worried even the best New York professionals. He possessed a manipulative skill in surgery and a love for the study of anatomy which amounted almost to a mania, and aspirated rumours had been wafted about in boon haunts that more than one of the cadavers he had so dexterously dissected had been procured by methods called "shady" in the vernacular. Then, too, Mr. Bertram was a "star"

athlete, possessing a strength which was most remarkable for one whose vocation was sedentary. He prided himself not a little upon this physical prowess, which fact, coupled with a quick temper and but little self-control, got him into trouble on more than one occasion.

In personal appearance and address "Charlie Bert" was quite prepossessing. The pupils of his eyes, to be sure, were not quite of a size, and he had a peculiar hesitation in his speech; but one is hardly supposed to examine a man with the same care he would bestow upon a *horse!* He dressed in the loudest fashion, and with dazzling ostentation, yet he boasted that his diamonds were of the first water and his raiment of the finest quality, as well as of the "smartest" and most expensive make. His habits, too, were known to make exorbitant demands upon his purse. The young woman with whom he associated had led several stronger men than "Charlie Bert" the pace that kills, and his boon companions whispered among themselves that she could confidently be depended upon to lead him, sooner or later, into grave irregularities.

As a matter of fact she had already done so. Unable, long since, legitimately to meet her exorbitant demands, he had eked out his salary by petty stock-gambling, and a fatal success in this had led him to enlarge greatly the scale of his operations. To do this he needed more capital, and he secured a temporary "loan" from his employer without taking the trouble to acquaint that gentleman of the fact. He was sure of being able to pay it back before any irregularity in his books should be discovered. A broker friend gave him a "straight tip" in C., B. & Q., and he put everything he could rake and scrape and all he dared to "borrow" from his employer into that stock.

Now, at just this particular time, much to the surprise

of Wall Street, it pleased James Eldredge Moreton and those who followed his lead to precipitate a panic in C., B. & Q., which act on his part proved to be a veritable boomerang, since it swept Charles Bertram clean of all he could justly call his own, as well as of some tens of thousands which figured upon his employer's books by way of false entries.

When, therefore, Mr. Moreton said he wished to see where his affairs stood, and asked for an immediate statement of his bank and trust company accounts, it was but natural that his clerk should be seized with a sudden fear that his irregularities had been discovered. In a few moments he returned, laid a little slip of paper at his employer's elbow, and left the room without comment, but not without an inward trepidation which beat so loudly against his ribs that it seemed to him that the young man at the desk must surely hear it.

Mr. Moreton scanned the slip long and earnestly, after which he uttered a low whistle.

"Phew! if Clara were to come down upon me now," he muttered to himself, "I can see where she'd have a run for her money. I suppose it *was* a bit irregular for me to use her funds for a private 'flier,' but I was so d——d sure of that stock I'd 'a' gambled my head upon it. Well, fortunes o' war, I suppose! It isn't the first time I've been between hawk and buzzard, if there's any comfort in that reflection. Let me see: I've got till the 12th,—nearly two weeks. Pshaw! that's long enough to make and lose a dozen fortunes. I ought to scare up a little matter of half a million in that time. Egad! it didn't take me twenty-four hours to 'blow in' Clara's cash! Oh, I'll find some way to jolly Tuttle along till something turns up. It's a blamed close call, but I reckon James Eldredge Moreton isn't 'all in' yet, by a long way. I'll get the excitement, anyway, even if Clara don't get her money, and that's pretty much all I care about."

CHAPTER II

So divine a thing is the love of a pure man for a pure woman that its ecstatic thrills are felt at the very throne of Omnipotence. Such adoration immediately becomes a religion, and anyone less spotless than the snow, who seeks association with the worshipped being, is regarded by the other half of love's equation with the active virulence which the church militant has ever visited upon blasphemy and desecration. The seeds of the worst hatreds are sown in the furrows of love. The reddest blush of History is an ashamed confession of battlefields of "love and mercy."

"WELL, what is it?" asked Mr. Moreton.

"Mr. Maitland wishes to see you," replied his clerk.

"Show him in."

After a few preliminary remarks the young financier came directly to the matter in hand.

"I asked you to call," he said, "because I wish your advice in what I esteem a somewhat important matter. You remember the 'close call' we had last winter with what you called the fourth-dimension gentry, from the weird, uncanny and seemingly supernatural disappearance of our big assailant with the bull-dog jaw? Well, after that experience I thought very seriously of offering a big reward for the apprehension and conviction of these scoundrels, when I happened to read Dr. Willard's account of the Darrow case and the effect produced by the reward offered by John Darrow. Naturally I was not anxious to repeat his experience, and had put this matter of reward out of my mind when something occurred last night which recalled it with absorbing interest, and led me to send for you. It was about 10 o'clock and I had just left the Eden Musée, where I had had an engagement with some friends,—who,

by the way, did not show up,—and had not walked half-a-dozen blocks when, without the slightest warning, a man sprang from the shadow of a door-way and struck viciously at my head with some sort of a club about the size of a policeman's billy. I saw him the moment he left his hiding-place, and when he struck I faced quickly about and caught the blow upon my cane. See, there's where he struck. If that had hit me, as planned, it would have sent me to the Happy Hunting Grounds, all right."

"Did you see him so as to form any idea of his appearance?" asked Maitland.

"Pick him out of ten thousand!" replied Moreton. "There was no mistaking that huge frame, the clean-shaven face, and the enormous bull-dog jaw. It was your fourth-dimension chap, all right. Now here's the funny part of it. He never attempted to strike the second blow, but made off at once. As you know, he can't run a little bit. Well, for a moment of course I was a trifle dazed, and that gave him a few yards' lead. I gained on him rapidly, but before I could overhaul him he ran heavily up a tall flight of stone steps and disappeared into the vestibule entrance of a fine house. I was a bit cautious how I followed, for I expected that he was intending to take me at a disadvantage when I opened the door. You may imagine my surprise when I discovered that he had again disappeared. In this case, however, there did not seem to be any great mystery about it. He had simply passed through the second doorway into the house. I made up my mind that this palatial abode must be the headquarters of some very select gang of criminals—counterfeiters perhaps. I lighted a match and looked at the number. It was 79! The name on the door-plate was Madame Celeste La Salle! The discovery

fairly took my breath away. I stood before the door of one of my wife's best friends—with whom she has been staying ever since she left my roof! This put an entirely new face on affairs and I immediately rang the bell. It was Marie who answered the summons and I related my experience to her. She looked at me with that calm, superior air which you have doubtless noticed, and said quietly: 'You are certainly in error, James, in thinking your assailant entered here. Madame La Salle and I are alone to-night, and we were most careful both to lock and chain this door. You doubtless noticed that the chain was on when I answered your ring.'

"'Mistake is out of the question,' I replied shortly. 'My assailant passed through this door-way less than two minutes ago. I'd stake my life upon it.'

"'You were ever prone, James, to take both large and unnecessary risks,' she replied with a slight trace of bitterness, and then continued after a short pause: 'What would you have? I will ask Madame La Salle to let you search the house if you desire.'

"Well, sir, to make a long story shorter, Marie telephoned for three officers, and while two of them stood guard without, I and the other one thoroughly ransacked the house. We took nothing for granted, but we found neither 'hide nor hair' of the big-jawed assailant."

"And the parties with whom you had the engagement at the Eden Musée—who were they?" asked Maitland.

"Oh, just acquaintances of mine," said Moreton evasively; but he added after second thought, "They are witnesses in my divorce suit."

He did not care to vouchsafe any further information in regard to these worthies lest Maitland should think it necessary to investigate them, and should in this way learn the character of their evidence.

"This, you see," Moreton continued, "is the second attempt upon my life, and the third time, they say, never fails. Naturally, I would be glad to avoid any repetition of this thing, and it has occurred to me, since there are at least two concerned in the affair, that if I make the reward big enough, one of them may be tempted to turn state's evidence. What is your idea?"

"I must confess that I incline strongly to the belief that this whole affair is the result of some pledge or compact of many, many years' standing," Maitland replied. "If so, the oath which binds these men together will not be lightly broken, and your reward will probably remain untaken unless earned by innocent parties. However, 'No cure, no pay' is always a safe plan to follow."

"What do you say to fifty thousand for a figure?" Moreton asked.

"Unnecessarily high," said Maitland.

"Oh, I don't know. I'd be glad to pay that to anyone who'd deliver the goods. I'll offer fifty thousand. I get some of it back, you know, in advertising," with which remark he drew his watch from his pocket and glanced slowly, and Maitland thought somewhat ostentatiously, at it. It was the finest, fullest-jewelled Waltham movement money could buy, enclosed in a solid, gold hunting-case, beautifully chased and bearing the monogram J. E. M. The hand that held it wore two magnificent rings, one an enormous diamond of faultless lustre, flanked by two rubies, and the whole massively set in Roman gold: and the other a single ruby in a chaste setting. His immaculate shirt-bosom held another diamond fully as large as the one in the ring. His necktie passed through a serpent in antique bronze, from the expanded head of which flamed a wondrously-fired opal.

"I shall advertise the reward at once, then, since you

see no objection, and shall be glad if you succeed in securing it for yourself," said the young financier with a trace of good-fellowship to which he seldom gave expression. He was feeling much better than before the interview, and Maitland left with the impression that even captains of industry, howsoever selfish, sordid and soulless, are not in *every* particular hopelessly detestable.

As soon as he was alone James Moreton again pressed the electric button. At the sound of the bell "Charlie Bert's" heart sank within him and a cold sweat stood out upon his forehead. It was his stroke of doom as he had heard it a score of times during those rallies of conscience, those protests of the soul, which euphemy calls dreams.

He opened the door in a half-mechanical way and stood trembling before his employer. "You may mail those notices of the special meeting of the stockholders of The International Wireless to-night," said Moreton. "See that they all get off," and he arose from his desk and prepared to leave the office.

"Charlie Bert" heaved an inward sigh and hurried from the room.

. . . . .

Shortly after the events last narrated James Eldredge Moreton called at the Reiss studio to see Eric Montrose. Eric was out and Reiss invited Mr. Moreton to await his return.

These two men would have had little or nothing in common under the most favourable circumstances; as it was, being rivals in the love of the same woman, they were like match and saltpetre—liable to explode at the slightest friction.

For a long while neither spoke, and then Moreton said, coming directly to the one fatal subject which attracted

him as a flame lures a moth: "I suppose you are aware, Mr. Reiss, that your attentions to Miss Sherwood are attracting much notice, and are most prejudicial to her professional interests."

Elbert Reiss calmly put aside his palette and brushes, arose from his easel, and walked slowly to where Moreton sat before he uttered a word.

"Permit me to inform you, sir, that my relations with the lady in question are distinctly her affair and mine. Neither you nor anyone else need trouble in the least about them."

"Pardon me!" replied Moreton with cool insolence. "A dramatic star owes something to her public. Her reputation is a matter of interest to her patrons!"

Reiss's fingers opened and closed convulsively. "Do you mean to insinuate——"

"Insinuate! Bah! It's the scandal of the town! Do you think her association with the co-respondent in a divorce suit is likely to help her reputation? Her name is in the common mouth! She has you to thank, sir, that report puts her in the same breath with such women as——"

"Stop!" and the artist sprang upon the financier and closed his fingers tightly about his throat. At this juncture George Maitland entered, but neither of the struggling men observed him, and for reasons of his own he forbore to interfere.

"Listen to me!" Reiss fairly hissed the words into Moreton's ear, as he held that athletic gentleman as if he were a recalcitrant child. "If ever again you breathe one syllable against Marion Sherwood, so help me God I'll kill you for it! Now go, and remember well what I have said, for by the living Christ I'll keep my word!" and he threw James Moreton violently across the room.

The young financier fell against the little table of

bric-a-brac, most of the contents of which he sent with a crash to the floor. He caught the table for support, and immediately righted himself. Almost under his hand lay a stiletto-like weapon. He seized it with the quickness of a cat, and, wild with rage, hurled himself upon the artist.

The shock almost upset both men, but lightning-like though it were, Reiss caught the descending arm before the dagger reached his breast.

Instantly Moreton, his face distorted and inhuman, attempted to transfer the weapon to his left hand, but before he could do so the artist seized his free wrist and held it fast.

With set teeth and narrowed eyes Reiss gradually forced Moreton's dagger-hand somewhat above his head, and then with a slow certainty brought the weapon closer and closer to his opponent's face. In a moment more the point would enter his left eye. Just at this juncture this figure upon the blade of the weapon held close before his face caught James Moreton's attention.

"The mark——!"

But he did not finish his exclamation. Instantly he dropped the weapon, and his arm, released by Reiss, fell listlessly by his side. A tremor ran through his frame, his eyes became introverted, his muscles twitched convulsively, and his countenance was of a flaming crimson. He staggered and would have fallen had not Maitland caught him.

When Moreton had rushed upon Reiss with the dagger Maitland dared not interpose, lest Reiss should be killed under his intervening arm. Moreton's exclamation at sight of the hieroglyph damascened into the weapon, and the paralysing effect the discovery produced upon him, impressed Maitland deeply.

part, and during that time Reiss had, at a hint from Maitland, left the studio.

When the financier was measurably himself again he looked carefully about him, and, observing that he was alone with Maitland, settled himself back wearily in his chair. He was now so pallid and listless that Maitland, fearing he was about to faint, hurried into the adjoining room for a glass of water. When he returned his patient had arisen and was about to depart. George passed him the water. He drained the tumbler without comment and it seemed greatly to refresh him.

Without so much as a word of thanks, apology or of explanation he turned and walked out of the studio, leaving Maitland standing, glass in hand, in the centre of the floor, busy with thoughts which words would thus have expressed:

"For turning the human perpendicular of civilisation down into the porcine horizontal of savagery, commend me to the greed of modern commercialism!"

CHAPTER III

If Dame Justice be ever pursued and threatened with annihilation she will instinctively throw her balances into the legislature and hide herself in the court-house, confident that no one seeking her will ever think of searching either of those palladia of liberty.

It was the morning after the quarrel between Moreton and Reiss. The first mail had just been delivered, but the artist, who sat in his studio with George Maitland, had laid his letters aside for future perusal. The door opened and Eric Montrose, pale, breathless and holding an open letter in his trembling hand, burst without ceremony into the room.

"Have you received one of these?" he asked excitedly.

"No, what is it?" said Reiss.

"Read for yourself," Eric responded.

"No. 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City, N. J.
"May 28, 19—.

"Mr. Eric Montrose,
"No. 397 ——— St.,
"New York, N. Y.

"Sir: A special meeting of the stockholders of The International Wireless Telephone Co. will be held at the offices of the Company, No. 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City, N. J., on the 13th day of June, 19—, at 3 o'clock P. M., to see if the shareholders will vote to sell the entire assets of The International Wireless Telephone Company of New Jersey to the National Improvement Company of New Jersey for the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars.

"Alfred H. Dickey, *Secretary.*"

When he had finished reading Reiss turned enquiringly toward Maitland.

"How much stock stands in your name?" asked Maitland of Eric.

"I had originally one million face value and have sold very little of it, as Mr. Moreton exacted from me an agreement that I would not sell more than one thousand shares, for a period of eighteen months from the date of incorporation. I have sold a little to Mrs. Moreton, some to Miss Sherwood, and to a gentleman in her company, and Mr. Reiss has a little. I cannot tell at the moment just how much of this has been transferred on the books of the company."

"You could probably control about one-fifth of the total stock then for a certainty?"

"Yes."

"What does your charter say regarding sale of the entire property of the company?"

"That only a two-thirds vote of the stockholders shall be required."

"H—m—m! I was afraid so."

"How has The International Wireless prospered? Is it in financial straits? Could its promoters honestly esteem the enterprise a failure?"

"Failure! It is triumphantly successful, both scientifically and commercially. We have done better than we have ever dared to hope."

"H-m-m! I am no seer, of course," George continued, "but this whole affair looks to me like a deliberate attempt at 'freeze-out.' I can make nothing else out of such a proposal to sell a prosperous five-million-dollar corporation,—even though it may be over-capitalised,—for the paltry sum of twenty-five thousand dollars."

"And in this event what becomes of the stockholders?" Reiss asked.

"They get their pro-rata share of the twenty-five

thousand,—if there be any of it left, after paying all the indebtedness of the company. Let me see; in my case, if the whole purchase price were distributed, I should realise just ten dollars, or one per cent. of my investment, which, considering the fact that I was 'let in' on the 'ground floor' isn't quite so good as Bell Telephone, is it?"

"But is there no way of preventing this outrageous robbery?" Eric asked, with no attempt to conceal his indignation.

"I'm afraid not, unless you can control something more than one-third of the voting stock," Maitland answered.

"But is there no legal process——"

"Legal processes," interrupted George, "operate chiefly against the poor and the innocent. Indeed, the law is anything rather than the poor man's friend."

"If this thing goes through, as planned," said Eric, "all my hopes, all my years of labour and of privation, will count for naught. Is there not some way to prevent this infamous crime?"

"If you can control something better than one-third of the voting stock, yes, otherwise I should say, no. I would advise you to lose no time in getting proxies for every share of stock you possibly can. Sound every stockholder save those you know to be in the scheme,—your friends first, of course,—and don't place too much confidence in the professions of the doubtful ones. Mr. Moreton is engineering this and he is——"

"A d——d scoundrel!" interrupted Eric excitedly. "He's not fit to walk the earth, and the sooner he's planted the better will it be for the rest of humanity!"

And pale with indignation and trembling with excitement, he made his way unsteadily to the door, at which

he turned and continued: "If the law can't reach him, the lawless can, and I call you gentlemen to witness now and here, that if James Moreton perpetrate this outrage I'll put him where he can't repeat it, as sure as my name is Eric Montrose!" and he closed the door noisily behind him.

CHAPTER IV

Expectation is the librarian who catalogues most of our observations, whence it not infrequently happens that many an affair of pure fiction attains to the high estate of the scientific alcove.

It was the morning of the thirteenth of June, and George Maitland had called early at the Reiss studio, hoping to see Eric before he went out. In this, however, he was disappointed. Eric had gotten an unusually early start, and had gone out to make a last attempt to secure certain proxies which he esteemed of vital importance to his cause.

"That," said Maitland, "is just what I called to see him about. How is he coming on?"

"He still lacks something like a hundred shares,—or at least he did this morning," replied Reiss, "and he has seen about everyone of whom he has any hope. Don't you suppose it would be possible to get someone to bid more than the twenty-five thousand and then demand a stay of proceedings on that ground? Certainly the Court would grant an injunction prohibiting a sale to any but the highest bidder."

"I should have advised such an attempt had I not learned after considerable quiet investigation that such a move had been forestalled with great care. News has gone abroad that The International Wireless is merely a stock-jobbing affair, and its large capitalisation is pointed to in proof thereof. The affairs of the company have been so managed that the books make a very bad showing. Now, anything we might do toward securing a higher bid would doubtless only raise the figure offered

by the 'straw' company. The pity of it is that it is so easy deliberately to wreck a business, and, at the same time, to make the public believe that the failure was inherent in the enterprise itself. Now in this case——"

But the entrance of Mrs. Moreton cut short the sentence.

"If Mr. Maitland will excuse you for a moment, Mr. Reiss," she said, "I would like a word with you in private upon a very important subject which, I am sorry to say, cannot wait."

"Certainly," said Maitland; "Mr. Reiss need stand on no ceremony with me."

"I will detain him but a minute," said Mrs. Moreton at the door of the inner room.

"Do not hurry," said George, "for it is time I was off and I shall be gone before you return. I merely want to get another glimpse at one or two of my favourite pictures before leaving."

When Mrs. Moreton and Reiss were alone in the inner room the former said, coming, with a trace of eagerness, directly to the matter uppermost in her mind:

"Have you seen the two men?"

"Yes, I saw them last night."

"Are you sure we can depend on them when the real crisis comes?"

"Yes, I feel confident we can."

"You took them to Mr. Clark, of course?"

"Certainly."

"Did he go carefully over the whole matter with them?"

"Yes, he spent an hour upon it."

"Did they win his confidence?"

"Completely, I should judge, from the remark he made to me as they left."

"What did he say?"

"If they don't cook James Eldredge's goose to a fine rich brown, I'm no prophet!"

"What you say is a great relief to me," the lady replied. "We have encountered such difficulties in finding these men that I had almost lost heart. There was so little time left. I assure you it has been a great strain upon me, for I would give half my life rather than fail in this undertaking. I am rejoiced that things promise so well," and she arose to depart. "I shall not forget, however, how much of it all I owe to you," and she extended her hand to him with much emotion.

When they reached the outer door Reiss said:

"I suppose, of course, you will not care to be present in person this afternoon."

"On the contrary," Mrs. Moreton replied, "I shall most assuredly be there. I have a slight interest, you know, in what occurs at this meeting," and with a little delicately-modulated, silvery laugh she left the studio.

"Of such fibre are martyrs made!" murmured Reiss to himself as he closed the door. "Let me not be less courageous than a woman," he continued half audibly, as he consulted his watch. "It must be done and I may as well have it over, though only God and I will ever know the pain it costs me!"

He sat down at his desk to write a few lines to Eric, and some verses he had but recently finished caught his eye and held his attention.

He read the whole heart-offering through from beginning to end. It ran as follows:

What sees the dewdrop on the rose?
What tender incense drinks it in?
What velvet heavens its touch knows—
Oh, paradise for seraphim!

What petalled whispers does it hear?
  What passion shakes its crystal soul?
What damask woe finds it a tear
  To tremble on the lid of Dole?

What nectar fills its cup of taste,
  And savours all that overflows,
To lave the passion-burdened haste
  Of dewdrop, drunken with the rose?

Oh, fadeless lustre of a dream,
  Dreamt in a crystal's focal heart,
Weave me into thy wondrous theme—
  Of thy fair heaven, the throbbing part!

Or, better still, from thy dear eyes,
  O maiden of the magic spell!—
Reflexes they of paradise—
  Let me the dewdrop's answers tell.

From their calm depths a light flames up,
  And blossoms sweet their leaves unfurl,
Till like a gem dropped in a cup,
  I see the rose quaff off its pearl.

Ah! then it is I thirst for thee,
  And hunger with the pang of thirst,
For thou art all that's heaven to me;
  Of flowers all most sacred—first!

Pearl of my cup, whate'er the draught,
  How bitter or how sweet it be,
It matters not, if when 'tis quaffed,
  Upon my lips my soul meet thee!

As he finished the tears came to his eyes.

CHAPTER V.

Fate is sometimes gentlest when she seems most cruel. The bruises she inflicts upon our youth serve often the purpose of making a tender, roseate history for our old age; and oh, the glory of a grand life-history! All records of great characters are written in blood, with the stylus of pain, and are preserved in the subliminal quick of our essential selves. For the ships that Life sails upon the Sea of Subconsciousness there is no return. They go down with all on board into the deep abyss of being, tingeing its waters with their own peculiar stain.

WHILE Reiss was leaving his studio two young women sat conversing in an uptown flat. One was fair-skinned and golden-haired, with wondrous violet eyes that seemed, when she laughed, fairly to fluoresce; the other darkly beautiful, with long, wavy black hair with the gloss of silk, and a complexion deep, rich and transparent.

"Oh, Lenore!" exclaimed the fair-haired woman; "strive how we women may for the tinsel vanities of life, sooner or later we all come to know that love is our true mission. Love is everything to a woman, dear,—there is nothing else really worth while.—Wasn't that the door-bell?"

"Yes, and I believe Sarah is out," replied Lenore, as she arose and left the room. She returned a moment later and passed a card to her companion, saying:

"The gentleman hopes you will see him, as he has something of importance to communicate."

"Mr. James Eldredge Moreton!" exclaimed Marion. "You may show him in, dear." It was plain to be seen that she was displeased.

"Pardon me, Miss Sherwood, for calling at this hour,"

said Moreton as he entered, "but necessity, you know, knows no law," and he smiled engagingly.

"Please be seated," she said briefly.

Mr. Moreton had hoped for a pleasant little chat with this new ideal of his, but she did not seem to encourage trivialities.

"I have taken this liberty, Miss Sherwood," he began, "because I felt sure that you were ignorant of certain things which touch your interests most closely."

"I am quite at a loss to know to what you refer. Please be more explicit."

"The matter is a somewhat delicate one," he continued, "and nothing but my duty to you as a friend emboldens me to mention it. Most of our friends, you know, conceal from us whatever is unpleasant, placing in the hands of our enemies the cups which hold the bitter, nauseous draughts,—as if that would make them the easier to swallow. Such a friend I hope you will never consider me, though at the moment I may seem to wear the unpleasant livery of my tidings. I could not see an ill daily befalling you, and not acquaint you of it."

"'Ill'? I am not aware that any ill is befalling me!" said Marion impatiently.

"Ah! that's the pity of it!" he exclaimed, with much apparent feeling. "Alas! I have good cause to know how easily the trustful are deceived. I, too, was unaware that any ill was happening me until"—and his voice seemed to break under its weight of emotion,—"until my wife was estranged and my home ruined by a man who should have guarded, rather than betrayed, my honour. Those who called themselves my friends saw what was happening long before I did, but they were not loyal enough to be the bearers of disagreeable truths, so I was left to find my shame unaided. May

God forbid that you should ever have a similar experience!"

"I infer," responded Marion, "that you have some unpleasant message to deliver. Please let me have it at once."

"If you will read these clippings you will understand the danger of which I would warn you," and he passed her two little bits of newspaper.

Holding them tremblingly in her hand, Marion read:

"The world of art has now a scandal which will furnish it with excitement for many a day. Mr. Elbert Reiss, one of New York's best-known artists, has been named as co-respondent in a divorce suit which is set for trial in the very near future. The plaintiff is Mr. James Eldredge Moreton, the well-known financier. Some rare sensations are promised at the trial."

The young lady paused a moment before perusing the other clipping. She was deathly pale, and everything seemed so dark, dim and far away that for a moment she feared she should lose consciousness. After a little, however, her vision cleared, and she read:

"The friends and admirers of Miss Marion Sherwood, the brilliant young actress who last season took New York by storm, are greatly shocked at the report that her engagement with Mr. Elbert Reiss is soon to be announced. Mr. Reiss is most favourably known as an artist, but upon his character as a man recent events seem to have cast at least a legitimate doubt. It is, indeed, a pity that such an artiste as Miss Sherwood should, at the very start, ruin her brilliant and promising career by such an unfortunate misalliance.

"There will, of course, always be some who will judge her work by itself, and care nothing whatever for the personal character behind it, but the great mass of the theatre-going public will withdraw its patronage from any star who offends the ordinary, time-honoured and sacred standards of social decency."

When Marion looked up Moreton saw that her eyes glistened with moisture, and that her face and throat were suffused with crimson. He perceived, too, a firm-

ness about the mouth which at once arrested both his attention and fear.

"As you must know," she said slowly, "I have never seen either of these libellous notices before. They are most malicious, and were inserted, I am sure, for the express purpose of injuring either one or both of us. I am sorry that you gave yourself the trouble of bringing them to me. Someone would certainly have brought them to Mr. Reiss's attention, and he would at once have laid them before me."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Moreton. "I have good cause, I regret to say, to know something of Mr. Reiss's methods. Bringing you those notices, or acquainting you with their tenor, would be the very last thing he would ever do. He has everything to lose and nothing to gain by your learning the truth.—He——"

"—Pardon *me*, sir! I, too, know Mr. Reiss, and somewhat better, I fancy, than you do, and I would pledge my life that he will—that he will adopt the manly course!"

"He will not acquaint you with the contents of these notices,—you may be sure of that. I'd risk a fortune on it!"

At this moment the door-bell rang and Lenore entered the room.

"Mr. Elbert Reiss," she announced.

"You see I am right!" and Marion looked triumphantly at her caller.

"Not yet!" he exclaimed. "He has not yet informed you of the notices."

"But he will, you shall see!" she said excitedly.

"Ah! doubtless,—after he sees me and knows I have already done so," retorted Moreton with cool irony.

"Oh! but he shall not see you," and Marion looked

quickly about her. "Here, step into the alcove and draw the curtains. There! Now we shall see!"

"And you will not tell him?" came from behind the curtains.

"No. You will hear all that passes, and will see how you have maligned him."

"Show Mr. Reiss in, dear," she said to Lenore as she glanced hastily into the mirror above her mantle. She quickly seated herself upon the sofa, as she heard Reiss's step in the hall.

"I know you will pardon this early call," he said, as soon as they had exchanged greetings, "when you learn the importance of the errand which brings me here."

"Indeed, you need not apologise, for I am very glad to see you," she said with that sweet smile which so became her.

But the man did not smile in return. His face was pale, his features drawn and rigid.

"I am afraid you will not be when you know the news I bring. Read those!" and with a manner as abrupt as his last utterance he placed two little newspaper clippings upon the arm of the sofa.

Marion took them up one at a time and scanned them carefully, as if reading them for the first time, and then said quietly, "The first, the shorter one, refers, I dare say, to the matter of which you spoke some time ago. You will remember that you told me charges had been made against you, which, if true, would justly deprive you of my respect; the other clipping is, of course, entirely false and clearly the result of studied malice. As such, ought we to permit them by worrying us to accomplish the very end for which they were designed?"

"You—you do not appear—to understand!"

"I understand," she said simply, "that someone seeks to injure at least one—possibly both—of us, and that

these calumnies are the means adopted. Is not that all?"

"All! Would to God it were!" and he paused, as if lacking the fortitude to continue.

"What more can there be?" she asked in gentle sympathy.

"All that there could be, were the lies about me true!" he exclaimed.

"Forgive me if I am stupid, but I do not understand."

Elbert Reiss arose and came quickly toward her. He paused directly in front of her, and looked down at her with a tenderness which she never forgot. His excitement vanished as he contemplated the young woman before him.

"You are right," he said in deep, mellow tones so soft that they seemed like unaspirated whispers; "you do not understand,—you will probably never understand! You do not understand the great light that dawned within me the moment I first saw your face. You do not understand how my soul met yours upon the canvas of Romeo and Juliet. You do not understand how I came to adore, to worship you,—to kneel nightly before you on canvas, while I prayed God to make me worthy to one day offer you my heart, my life, my soul! You do not understand how, when the picture was removed, I offered to present your manager with your portrait for 'The Odeon,' in order that I might inhabit Heaven again for a brief period. You do not understand how you are light and warmth and life to me; how without you my soul gropes shiveringly in that outer darkness which is death. Oh, my God, how I love you! Even the air you breathe, the ground you press, is hallowed! You do not understand—*how should you?* Only love, love like mine, and love for *me*, unworthy as I am, could ever teach you the alphabet of my suffering!"

He paused and buried his face in his hands. A great light flamed up in the heart of the young woman, and a bird of promise, mistaking it for the dawn, uttered a glad pæan of praise. She forgot all but the man before her and his love,—forgot they were not alone, and murmured gently, as she smiled through her tears, "I understand now!"

The man before her either did not hear, or hearing, did not comprehend the import of her confession.

"You do not understand what a Heaven-sent privilege it was to me to be able to see you,—to feel your presence; and now all that must end. These lies must be as truth,—and we must part,—must see each other no more for your good name's sake! You do not understand all this, and only through love of me could you ever learn it. And now we must part for——"

"No, do not say it!" she exclaimed quickly, as she laid her hand upon his arm. He looked down with surprise into her tear-stained face.

"I have already learned it, Elbert," she said gently. "*I understand!*"

For a moment he seemed dazed, like one who awakes from a dream and wonders if he dream not still. Then *he* understood and caught her to his heart as their lips met in love's spontaneous betrothal.

A loud, mocking, satanic laugh came from behind the curtains! The man and woman turned quickly toward them as James Eldredge Moreton, convulsed with laughter and holding his sides with his hands, stepped out into the room.

Reiss disentangled himself quickly from Marion's embrace.

"Ach!" he exclaimed with loathing, as he seized her by the throat. "You act your part well! My God! how well you act your part!" and he hurled her from him

prone upon the floor, where she lay motionless. Then he sprang toward Moreton and brought him quickly to the floor. His hands were about the prostrate man's throat, and his knee upon his chest, when Lenore entered. Reiss was not aware of her presence.

"So you forgot the oath I made you! Possibly you thought I didn't mean it!" he hissed into Moreton's ear as he tightened his hold upon his throat.

"Gentlemen! What does this mean!" exclaimed Lenore, seizing Reiss by the shoulder. She was obliged thrice to repeat her question before he noticed her. At length, however, he released his hold and Moreton sprang to his feet.

"I'll keep my oath on a more fitting occasion!" the artist shouted, and rushed wildly from the room.

. . . . .

Marion Sherwood lay unconscious.

CHAPTER VI

When a man is a *de facto* child of Satan why not call him bad? If this be pessimism, those who are always trying to find good in evil should be reminded that, in roasting the damned, the Devil warms the cellarage of heaven.

No. 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City, N. J., had anything but a prepossessing external appearance. Its ground plan was just eighty feet square, and it had the severe outlines of a packing-case. In its days of vigour, before it became decrepit and ramshackle, the structure might have been a sail-loft, or a warehouse for temporary storage. Now the sills were rotted out at the corners, and great holes appeared at uneven intervals in the side walls. There had been a door in the side facing the street, and a smaller one in a most unexpected location right in the northeast corner of the rookery. The former had been the ground floor entrance, and had been boarded up when Mr. James Moreton took the premises; the latter communicated by a narrow, steep and rickety stairway, the treads of which were some ten degrees out of level, with the story above; and this entrance, now that the main door was nailed up, was the only opening below stairs, for there were no windows in the lower story.

The building, which had never been painted, was ornamented by a liberal exhibit of signatures, with now and then a rude attempt at portraiture. One mark in particular was worthy specific mention. It was some sort of a hieroglyph shaped thus, and located about a foot above the keyhole on the left-hand edge of the door. Just over the top of the casing was a little sign. The letters

were of pale grey on a light-blue ground, and the whole was so worn that one would have thought the thing had been scrubbed with sand. At the distance of three rods they would indeed have been sharp eyes which could have deciphered its legend, to wit: "The International Wireless Telephone Company.—Office."

Just in front of the door which had been nailed up was a tall electric light pole, carrying both direct and alternating currents, the former feeding the arc circuits used for street illumination and the latter for power and for incandescent lighting. Upon this pole was a step-down transformer, dropping the voltage from 2000 to 104 volts; and from this a circuit ran into No. 163. To the back of the rookery, some two rods from its rear wall, was a lofty pole carrying the wave-collector of the wireless telephone system. From this also wires passed into the decrepit structure. The rookery stood by itself, like a stricken thing deserted by its kind, and sorry was the spectacle it presented. When Eric had asked why he had chosen it, Mr. Moreton had replied, "I fancy what's good enough for John D. is good enough for us. Now, the Standard has built up such a power that it is to-day able to challenge our most fundamental democratic institutions. Standard Oil is the quickest known solvent for the ink of our National Constitution, and the best legislative lubricant yet invented. The Standard Oil History is my mercantile bible, and John D. Rockefeller my prophet. My scripture relates how the prophet held his meetings in a rookery, and I need no Thomas à Kempis to tell me how to imitate him."

. . . . . .

It is two o'clock in the afternoon of June 13th and everything about No. 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City, is quiet and deserted.

There are rumours that The International Wireless

Telephone Company is in a bad way, and corroborative of these rumours is the fact that the Jersey City station has been shut down now for some weeks. No one has been in attendance for many days.

At about 2:15 three men approach the rookery, and one of them takes a bunch of keys from his pocket and opens the small door beneath the pallid sign. At the head of the rickety stairway is a door which has neither latch nor lock, and apparently is intended merely as a screen to prevent those at the lower door from looking into the upper hall-way. The visitor who opens this door for the first time invariably pauses in amazement at the sight which meets his gaze. A spacious hall-way fully eight feet wide extends from north to south the entire depth of the structure. It is richly finished in red cedar polished until its beautiful tones shine like mirrors of pink glass. In the centre of the hall is an elaborate electrolier, so generously supplied with lamps that one feels a sense of superabundant illumination. No ray of daylight is to be seen, after the upper door, made of polished cedar on the one side and rough, unpainted and age-discoloured boards on the other, swings to. Directly to the left of this door is the electric button which controls the lights of the hall. One of the three men had pressed this button as soon as he had reached the upper landing.

At either side of the hall, at intervals, are beautifully carved chairs, elaborately upholstered in leather; and upon the walls hang pictures of high artistic excellence. One cannot but feel that he who planned all this did so with the purpose of making, through antithesis, the profoundest possible impression of affluence and luxury. If so, he had good cause to congratulate himself upon the results secured.

Traversing the hall from the stair door, you pass first

a door to the left, then one to the right, and then another left-hand door near the end of the hall. These left-hand doors are the entrances to two rooms used for exhibiting the operation of the wireless telephone system. It is with the apartment upon the other side that the three men are at present chiefly interested. The one who unlocked the lower door now takes from his pocket a single key and opens the only door upon the right-hand side of the hall-way, leaving the key in the lock. He and his companions enter, and ere they can close the door behind them we, too, will edge in. Before the man who unlocked the door has had time to press either of the two electric buttons we note the delicious coolness of the air, so different from the sultry heat without; but a moment later we detect a less agreeable closeness, as if the atmosphere were devitalised. The man with the keys notices it, too, for he says:

"Whew! smells like the catacombs on the Appian Way! Good thing we came early," and he presses a button which diffuses a flood of light throughout the room. We see him also touch another button, but do not perceive that the illumination is in any wise affected. Then, hearing a low, gentle, whirring sound, and feeling a breath of air upon our cheeks, we know an electric fan has been started, although we cannot find it. Here, too, every ray of light is artificial. There is not a window in the room. The problem of ventilation at once suggests itself, and, looking about for a solution, we discover at either end of the room two narrow, iron-grated, register-like openings not over three inches wide and perhaps three feet long. One upon the front or southern end of the room,—the end near the street,—is close to the ceiling, while that in the opposite wall is within a foot or so of the floor. Each is one mouth of an air pipe, the other end of which opens upwardly through the roof. The whirring sound

proceeds from an exhaust blower located in the rear of the apartment.

In this way an abundant supply of fresh air is assured.

About the door,—there is but one in the entire apartment,—is a neat brass railing provided with a little gate opening toward the centre of the room. Within this railing are a desk and chair, a large oak wardrobe and a letterpress stand.

The furnishings are massive and sumptuous. The walls, unlike the hall, are not finished in natural wood, but are papered in a flat tint of delicate flesh colour, which makes the room easy to light, as well as pleasing and restful to the eye.

The portrait of James Eldredge Moreton, recently painted by Elbert Reiss, hangs upon the wall opposite the door, flanked on either side by a rare bit of landscape work beautifully framed in gold. Other artistic gems lend the unique charm of creative genius to other portions of the room. The flat tone of the walls sets off the pictures to the very best advantage.

At the northern end of the room is a large, flat-top, quartered-oak desk, used at the meetings by the presiding officer. The room being destitute both of closets and of recesses, a massive, double-doored cabinet, also of quartered-oak, serves in lieu thereof. At present it contains nothing but a seersucker office-coat and a clothes-brush belonging to Moreton, but with its doors closed and locked, the imagination may easily crowd it with all manner of office raiment. At all events, it fills a blank portion of one of the walls, and helps to break a long straight line of the large, prosaic, and severely box-like apartment, destitute as it is of windows, closets, jogs, recesses, or anything in fact upon which, or in which, a wearied eye may rest itself. It stands against the hall partition and inside of the brass railing sur-

rounding the door. Between this double-doored wardrobe or portable closet and the desk is a letterpress stand provided with drawers and surmounted by a copying press, which would seem to indicate that more or less business of a clerical nature is occasionally transacted in this room. This copying cabinet is also within the railing, which brings it partly across the northern door of the portable closet so that it would be necessary to move it before this door could be opened,—a fact which would at once lead the acute observer to infer that a single one of the wardrobe's two compartments is amply sufficient to answer all the requirements of the office.

The floor is neatly covered with the finest grade of linoleum devoid of all ornamentation.

A large table occupies the centre of the apartment, and substantially built chairs, upholstered in leather, are conveniently disposed about the room.

It needs but a glance to show that great care has been taken in transforming the interior of this structural wreck into business apartments of such elegance.

This result was achieved by Mr. Moreton, aided by his clerks. He had spent many an hour here with the carpenters, and had even become so interested that he had borrowed their tools on one or two occasions, and, though Wall Street would probably not believe it, had then and there actually worked *with his hands!* Inasmuch, however, as he was careful not to do this until all the other men had left, he was not publicly disgraced, for no one was there to see him work, and he kept his own counsel about it. The unusual experience carried him back to his boyish days before God's bright sun had come to look to him so like a little, round, yellow dollar.

Upon the president's desk are writing materials; a pair of long shears; a pile of papers; a big stick of red sealing-wax now doing duty as a paper-weight; an elab-

orately carved candlestick and wax candle; the corporate seal of The International Wireless; several books; two flat baskets marked respectively "live matter" and "dead matter"; a sheet-iron check-cutter; a rule, and an adjustable calendar set at April 1st.

The man with the keys, who is none other than Mr. James Eldredge Moreton, notices the calendar and chuckles gently to himself as he changes its date to June 13th.

Does he think the infamous theft he has planned partakes of the nature of a joke? And why should he not? What to him the ruin of Eric Montrose and a few others? He has, he thinks, rather outdone those strokes of commercial finesse which succeed only because they take the opponent by surprise; and he cannot refrain from chuckling at the thought of his superiority.

In this game of chess he has not suddenly unmasked his queen and discovered a fatal check. He has done better than that, for he has given fourteen days' notice, —has, if you please, announced a forced mate fourteen moves in advance! Verily, this financial Napoleon has his *coup d'état*, too, and he considers it, if appearances are to be trusted, such a rare joke that he has more than half a mind to reset the calendar at April 1st.

"Do you wish me to check the proxies?"

It was Charles Bertram who asked the question.

"Yes," Moreton answered; "you will sit there at the desk within the railing, and see to it that no one comes in who is not properly qualified. Montrose has been very active, and it is probable his side will be fully represented as well as ours. It will be a close call, and we may have to strain a point, Charlie,—we *may*, you know. You'll not forget what I told you?"

"No sir," said "Charlie Bert" promptly.

"When it comes to the voting, Harry," said James

Moreton to the other young man, "I shall appoint you and Charlie inspectors, and I shall depend upon you to see that our side gets a two-thirds vote. You understand what I mean, I trust?"

"Sure!" said Henry Gates laconically if not grammatically. "We count the votes and make the returns. *Our report'll be O. K.;* but if there's a question raised as to its correctness——"

"The presiding officer will see to that. You'd better get everything ready, for they're beginning to arrive. I hear someone coming now. Call out the name and amount, Charlie, of each one as he comes in," and James Moreton seated himself at his desk and prepared the following schedule:

		Shares
Total No. Shares		500,000
Amount voting		400,000
Necessary for control		266,667
James Moreton	151,000	
Other interests by James Moreton, proxy	114,000	
		266,667
Total	265,000	265,000
No. of shares still needed for control		1,667

At this juncture a gentleman entered. Charles Bertram spoke to him and then called out:

"Cornelius Draper;—655 shares."

"There's more than a third of what we need now," whispered Moreton as he wrote:

"Cornelius Draper;—655 shares."

"Eric Montrose;—99,705 shares."

James Moreton entered the name and amount upon his schedule, and he performed a similar operation as each name was called.

"George Maitland;—200 shares. Mrs. James Moreton;—50 shares," Mr. Bertram announced.

The gentleman at the desk, without a moment's hesitation, put this fifty shares down as voting against him.

"Martha Warren, by Nathaniel Clarke, proxy;—10,000 shares."

Moreton put down Clarke as against him.

"Edward Willard;—200 shares."

"Mrs. Cyrus Decker, by Edward Willard, proxy;—15,000 shares."

"Elbert Reiss;—100 shares."

"Simon J. Perry;—900 shares."

"That's good," said Moreton half aloud, as he put down 900 shares on his side of the schedule. "Only one hundred and two shares more and we're all right."

This remark Maitland overheard, and he took an early occasion to transmit its tenor to Eric.

"Marion Sherwood, by Carl Wister;—100 shares."

"Frank Bartlett;—90 shares."

"Good for Bartlett!" muttered Moreton to Gates, who had just approached him as he put down ninety shares on his side of the list. "Only another dozen shares, and it's two minutes of three," he continued, consulting his watch. "The opposition isn't in it. In two minutes we'll call time and rush 'em. They haven't a 'ghost of a chance,'" and he laid his watch upon the desk where he could observe it constantly.

Maitland noticed the act, and advancing compared the time with his own. It was an open-faced silver timepiece, and appeared to be rather a cheap affair for a man of such expensive tastes, at least so Maitland thought, but yet, for all that, it was true to the second.

"William Wilkes, by Theodore Belcher;—1000 shares."

"Wilkes has gone back on us," said Moreton to Gates, in an undertone, as he put down one thousand shares on the Montrose side of his list.

	Shares
"Daniel Wilton, by Solomon Cohen, proxy..	5000
Alberta Horne " " " ..	1500
Leonard S. Greene " " " ..	400
Milton Perkins " " " ..	50

"Sixty-nine hundred fifty shares!" exclaimed Moreton to Gates, as he made the entry and rapidly struck a total. "There are but forty shares unaccounted for," he said excitedly, "and we need less than half of them to be 'on velvet'! We are far in the lead as it is, and it wants but forty-five seconds of the hour!"

Eric Montrose was pale, worn and tremulous with excitement as he stood watch in hand, counting the seconds which were between him and whatever fate held in store for him. He knew that James Moreton would not grant a minute's grace in calling the meeting to order, and that he would make short work of all preliminaries and speedily proceed to the vote.

Maitland, Willard, Reiss,—all who sympathised with Eric, as well as the partisans of Moreton, caught the spirit of excitement which was in the air.

Thirty seconds of the hour and the strength of the opposing factions remained as before.

A step was heard in the hall; Eric's face brightened.

"I thought I could depend upon him," he said to himself.

"Henry Forsythe Carew;—5 shares," called Mr. Bertram.

Eric Montrose closed his eyes, and it seemed for a moment as if the whole apartment rocked like a cradle. He seized a chair to steady himself, and then, as if unable to stand, slid gently into it.

"Good for the doctor!" exclaimed Moreton, in such a loud undertone that not only Mr. Gates but Maitland and everyone else in that part of the room overheard him; "I'd no idea he'd show up."

Twenty seconds of the hour and the Montrose faction still lacked twenty-nine shares of control.

Ten seconds of the hour! and Eric's hand closed convulsively over his watch. The blow was a heavy one to him, for he had, by almost superhuman effort, secured just enough support to control the meeting. To lose the day,—and that, too, by only twenty-nine shares,—through the broken covenant of one in whom he reposed every confidence, was a bitter, soul-sickening business, and Maitland, who watched Eric narrowly, feared the young inventor's constitution,—undermined by years of privation and driven to the verge of nervous breakdown by the past two weeks' incessant toil and sleeplessness,—might not be able to stand the strain. For this reason he remained within easy reach of him; and then, too, he had not forgotten Eric's threat, and while he thought it the idle outburst of over-strained patience, there was still something about the young man's manner that seemed to counsel him to be on the alert.

Five seconds of the hour! and James Eldredge Moreton picked up his watch and said:

"Please be seated!"

Then a step was heard upon the stair. Eric Montrose sprang to his feet and made his way unsteadily toward the door. James Moreton followed him. There was a quick step along the hall, and then a very tall, thick-set bearded man of some sixty-odd years of age, with very

dark hair, shot at the temples with grey, coal-black eyes, and a skin as deep-toned as a mulatto, with some sort of blue tracery showing upon all uncovered portions, entered the room.

Charles Bertram gave a start of surprise as his eyes fell upon the face of the dark-skinned giant, and anyone might easily have seen that this swarthy gentleman called up disagreeable memories.

"I thought I should never find this place," said the stranger, "and was just concluding I should have taken a balloon, instead of a car, when I saw a man standing over at the other corner. He had spurs for climbing poles strapped to his legs, and I thought, being an electric lineman, he might be able to direct me. As a forlorn hope I asked him, and he sent me here as straight as a spear-thrust. Sorry, if I've kept you waiting."

"Your name, please," said Mr. Bertram in an unnatural voice.

"John White," replied the man.

"You are not a stockholder," said "Charlie Bert," consulting his book. "May I see your proxy, please?"

"Rachel Eichberg, thirty-five shares," said Mr. White, producing a paper.

At the name "Eichberg" "Charlie Bert" started from his chair as if he intended to spring at Mr. White's throat,—a suspicion which a face livid with rage went far to make a conviction. He thought better of it, however, after a moment and resumed his seat.

Mr. White continued as if nothing unusual had happened:

"I thought I might have to send a substitute, so I have not filled my name in as yet. May I trouble you for a pen?"

"My clerk will save you the bother. Charles, fill in Mr. John White's name," and Mr. Moreton held out his

hand for the proxy, which Mr. White gave him. Moreton placed it before his clerk and that functionary dipped his pen to write.

"One moment, please," said James Moreton; "any middle initial?"

"No; plain John White," replied the dark man.

"Just glance at Eichberg again; I'll attend to this," said Moreton, and with a few rapid sweeps of his pen he filled in the proxy, blotted it, and pushed it toward his clerk.

"Charlie Bert" started as his eyes rested upon it, and a momentary flush swept across his face. Then he pulled himself together and announced tremulously:

"Rachel Eichberg, by James Eldredge Moreton;—35 shares."

"Excuse me, but you've made a mistake; it is 'Rachel Eichberg, by John White!" said that gentleman politely.

"The proxy reads 'Rachel Eichberg by James Eldredge Moreton,'" and Charles Bertram held the paper up to view.

"*He has filled in his own name!*" gasped Eric.

For a moment both factions stood aghast at this unblushing effrontery, this perfectly bare-faced dishonesty. Not a man but was completely dumfounded at this cool display of commercial depravity. James Moreton returned to his desk and sat down.

Mr. John White turned to the stockholders. He was over sixty years of age, but in his excitement he would easily have passed for less than fifty. He threw off a good fifteen years with the squaring of his massive shoulders and the drawing up of his herculean frame.

"Gentlemen," he said, with full, measured utterance, "are you going to tolerate such an outrage as this?

Are you going to permit one of your number to be openly despoiled of his most fundamental rights under the law? Come, gentlemen, what say you?"

"No! No! Never!" came from the Montrose faction as they gathered closely about John White.

The Moreton faction made no reply, but they quietly drew in toward the president. Messrs. Bertram and Gates left their position near the door and stood one upon either side of his chair.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. White, "unless I be recognised as Rachel Eichberg's representative, we will prevent the meeting and clear the room. May I never eat anything but fern-root if I don't think I could do it alone!" and he assumed an aspect so fierce that the front rank of the opposition shrank back. Such a metamorphosis they had never before seen. The suave, polished gentleman had given place to an aboriginal giant who seemed more like to fight with teeth than fists. His black Malayan hair fairly bristled, and his eyes flamed with a wicked lustre as he stepped forward between the two factions, the better to general his forces. Then he caught sight of Mrs. Moreton.

"A lady!" he exclaimed, and his manner visibly softened as he called out to her, "Pardon me, madam, but this is no place for a woman. I trust you will leave at once."

Mrs. Hortense Marie Moreton bowed her acknowledgment, but instead of leaving she made her way forward and stood at Reiss's elbow in the very front of her faction.

"Well, sir, your answer!" White shouted to Moreton. "Will you take your name off my proxy, or shall I write my name on you? Choose and be quick about it!"

James Moreton was very pale as he rose to reply, but there was no trace of indecision in his manner.

Before he could speak, however, Dr. Carew stepped forward and said to the Montrose faction:

"Gentlemen, I beseech you, control yourselves,—at least until I have exhausted my good offices in attempting to straighten this matter out. As Mr. Moreton's physician I may be able to show him the enormity of the offence he has committed and to induce him to repair the wrong before it is too late," and he turned toward Mr. Moreton.

"James," he said severely, "what you have just done is, I am sure, without parallel in the whole commercial history of New York."

"Which illustrates," said James Eldredge Moreton in a tone fairly frigid with sarcasm, "the ignorance of specialists upon all but their own little hand-patch of knowledge. You are quite unaware that in filling out this proxy I followed the precedent of one of the best-known and richest of New York's financiers, one whose name you have heard many a time in connection with our elevated system. You may be assured I am following a good model."

"But, James, it is unfair, dishonest, disreputable!"

"All this may be so," retorted Moreton with cool, incisive utterance, "but it's good business, and it worked before, which is all I know, and *all I need to know* about it."

"Let me conjure you to abandon this mad course. You know you have no right——"

"You waste your breath, sir," interrupted Moreton impatiently. "What I plan to do, I do. I go *through* obstacles, not *around* them. I trust I make myself clear."

"You do, quite clear," replied the doctor with some bitterness. "Now listen to me while I inform you that I do not care to keep the acquaintance of any man

capable of such an exhibition of depravity. I have but five shares, I regret to say, but those I shall place at the service of these gentlemen," and he stepped over to the Montrose faction.

"As you please," retorted James Eldredge Moreton, with a laugh. He seemed disposed to treat his physician's disaffection as a joke, rather than as an irreparable loss.

"I, too, gentlemen, have a word to say!" exclaimed Maitland, stepping forward. "I am at present in the employ of Mr. Moreton, a relation which I wish to terminate instantly. I call you all to witness that I sever all connections with Mr. James Eldredge Moreton now and here, and demand the immediate acceptance of my resignation."

"Which I grant without question," replied Moreton.

"I will return all documents to you to-morrow," Maitland continued. "Thank you, gentlemen; that is all I have to say."

"If no other weak-kneed individual desire to desert my standard," said the young Napoleon of the Exchange, with a sneer, "I will call the meeting to order and proceed to business."

John White took a step forward. "Will you recognise me as the Eichberg proxy?"

The question was asked in a deep, low voice, yet one so intense that it seemed as if the words were almost hissed across the desk, straight into Moreton's face.

That gentleman's countenance had the pallor of death, but there was not the slightest tremor in his voice as he replied: "I will not!"

"Then there will be no meeting!" shouted John White as he stripped off his coat and threw it in a chair.

"Gentlemen, let's clear the room! Be careful of the lady!"

"'WILL YOU RECOGNISE ME AS THE EICHBERG PROXY?'"

Moreton sprang to his feet.

"Now then!" continued White. "The fine gentleman behind the desk is my heart—I mean my choice! I speak for him!" and he rushed forward to seize him.

Before John White could pass the desk a pistol-shot rang out so loud and near that everyone held his breath, as he looked about to see who had been hit, and some dropped quickly to the floor for fear they themselves might stop the next bullet which all felt sure would instantly follow its predecessor. No weapon could be seen.

Then, without a second's warning, and as if the shot had been a signal, all the lights went out, plunging the apartment into absolute darkness.

Confusion reigned! Some made a rush toward what they thought was the door and, mistaking their bearings, charged into the midst of the opposing faction, thus precipitating a panic.

Each side thought the other was attacking it in the darkness.

In less than ten seconds the room was a pandemonium of struggling, fighting men. No one could tell friend from foe; so, in the frenzy of the moment, each hit out aimlessly in the darkness, in the blind endeavour to maintain a little unoccupied circle of safety about his own person.

Then a loud cry caused a momentary pause. It was neither a moan nor a scream, yet it mixed something of both with its imprecation.

"Ach! Curse you! Help! Take him off, he's killing me! Oh!" and the whole building shook as with the fall of a heavy weight.

The struggling mass of humanity paused like a single organism transfixed with terror.

"A light! a light! Someone light a match!" It was

a lady's voice, and, brought to their senses by the superior presence of mind of a woman, several men immediately lighted matches, which sent a weird, fitful and uncertain glow over the scene.

"Someone light the candle on the desk," called Maitland from somewhere near the centre of the room.

Reiss, Eric, Clarke and White all reached for it with lighted matches, but before they had an opportunity Charles Bertram had lighted it.

"Quick! Bring it here!" exclaimed Dr. Carew, as he bent over a prostrate form upon the floor.

Eric passed the lighted candle to him and he held it close to the figure stretched at full length. The face was upturned. It was the face of James Eldredge Moreton!

The hilt, and a bit of the blade, of a dagger projected from his left breast. The weapon had struck with unerring accuracy over the heart and had been driven home almost to the handle.

"It was left in the wound," Maitland said to himself, "in order that its possession might not incriminate the assassin."

CHAPTER VII

Death, which is merely the dropping of the loosened poppy petals into the great, drowsy parent-ocean of slumber whence they came, is the only kind of darkness which at once both conceals and illumines. It often blurs to acquittal the grossest outlines of our faults, and sharpens to definiteness the minutest details of our virtues. It sucks the breath of criticism, and ties the tongue of truth,—in short, it is a sort of anamorphoscope whereby a heinously deformed life not infrequently assumes a symmetrical beauty of which even a seraph might well be proud.

DARKNESS paints even the commonplace with the brush of fear, while it gives to the naturally tragic its full palette of horror. Shapes which smile affably at you at noonday refuse to recognise you at midnight, and shriek a cavernous, sepulchral, graveyard disapproval of any attempt at familiarity. To partially light the uncanny is, as it were, but to show a single feature of Horror's gruesome ugliness, leaving the imagination to fill out the frightful visage with dread for a pencil and Terror's curdled crimson for a pigment.

The group that pressed close about the body of James Eldredge Moreton, seen in the feeble light of the candle which Dr. Carew held in his hand as he bent over the prostrate figure of his patient, so vigorous, virile, and defiant a minute before,—now so calm, pallid, motionless and unassertive,—was one which would have thrilled Rembrandt's soul of contrast, and have translated him to a veritable seventh heaven of chiaroscuro. How his artistic nature would have revelled in the varied expressions upon the faces of the men and of the one woman present! How he would have striven to imprint upon the countenance of each the horror which comes from

the awful conviction that murder has just been committed, and that the assassin, with the ghastly act still fermenting in his soul, is standing in his very presence, —perhaps actually pressing his elbow!

And the guilty one? Would he have let the brutal psychic red of the jungle seep through the thin, patchy, desquamative carnations of civilisation, to form itself upon his countenance into a legible brand of Cain? If so, which man would he have chosen? Surely he would not have suspected the *woman*, so queenly and self-contained, albeit so deeply moved? Ah, no! there is certainly motive enough to be found elsewhere without mistrusting a woman;—yet who can tell?

The first thing Dr. Carew does, as the light of the candle falls upon the body of his patient, is to pluck the dagger from his left breast and lay it upon the floor beside him. The weapon looks so familiar to Maitland that he scrutinises it as closely as the feeble light will permit. He cannot be certain, since it lies in partial shadow upon the floor, just what the figures are upon the blade, but he is sure that just below the hilt there is some sort of figure—the lower half of which is obscured by blood—strangely resembling the hieroglyph which he had seen in each of the threatening letters, upon Romeo's dagger, on the back of the left hand of his burly assailant, in the newspaper clipping anent the assassination of the elder Moreton, and upon the outside door of the very building in which the body now rests in its little crimson pool.

There is in all of Dr. Carew's movements the unhurried rapidity of the skilled physician. It is but a matter of some thirty seconds since the victim fell, and less than fifteen since his physician knelt, candle in hand, by his body, yet the doctor has already removed Moreton's coat and vest and is now laying bare the wound. Mait-

land is holding the candle for him, in order that he may have free use of both hands. The doctor places his ear to the prostrate man's breast.

"I am a physician," says Dr. Willard, elbowing his way through the little circle of excited men; "can I be of any assistance?"

Dr. Carew looks up quickly as if startled at the unexpected sound of a human voice amid a scene so gruesome.

"He is past all mortal help," he says in a low, awe-inspiring tone. "The dagger passed directly through the right ventricle. Death resulted instantly. See, here is the wound."

"Are there not two wounds, Doctor?" asks Maitland, lowering the candle. "What is that lozenge-shaped discoloration just below and a little to the right of the wound you have mentioned? Was not that produced by a dagger-thrust?"

"Yes, but it was by one given his father before James was born. It is a birth-mark, you see," and Dr. Carew passes his hand over it.

"If you will kindly step back a little, gentlemen, I will turn the corpse over to see if there are any other wounds," saying which the physician deftly rolls the body upon its face.

"There's a wound there between the shoulder-blades!" Maitland exclaims.

"It is, indeed, so!" says Dr. Carew, in a tone of surprise.

"And see, there upon the back of the neck! Are not those the imprints of fingers?" Maitland continues.

"There can be no doubt of it," the doctor replies.

"Look at them closely!" cries Maitland excitedly. "See the double row of finger-prints,—four on either side,—and note that those which were made by the left hand show no nail-wounds, while all four impressions

made by the right hand exhibit unmistakably the scars of finger-nails!—and look! look at the mark made by the left forefinger! Observe how——" But he does not finish the sentence, for it suddenly occurs to him that he has discovered a clew which will enable him,—if he can get sight of all the left forefingers in the room,—to locate the assassin with practical certainty, and he fears what he has already said may materially interfere with his freedom of observation.

He notices upon the floor in the shadow of the desk a little rectangular object about the size of a small note-book, and perhaps half an inch thick, and thinking it something the assassin may have dropped in the scuffle, he deftly covers it with his foot until able to pick it up without attracting attention, when he thrusts it into his pocket without attempting to examine it.

He has no idea of sequestering these things from the authorities, but he feels fully warranted in taking temporary charge of anything likely to have a bearing upon the case while the opportunity presents itself. Is he not a special officer, as well as a detective?

Dr. Carew's examination is over in a few moments. When it is finished he says:

"Gentlemen, a frightful murder has been committed in our very presence; and the assassin, whoever he may be, is even now among us. The deed, however, is not, I am confident, wholly the work of one man. You all heard the pistol-shot, and noted that the room was almost instantly plunged in darkness. That shot, which seemed to us so close at hand, was fired outside to notify the assassin that the light would be turned off a moment later, and to warn him to get within striking distance of his victim and to plan his blow. The man who cut off the light outside is probably the one Mr. White mistook for an electric lineman. If so, he should

be easy to recognise. We have a record of everyone present, and have, therefore, the name of the principal in this crime; but the accomplice—should we not go in pursuit of him now while he has at best only a few moments' start of us?"

"I have had some experience in these matters," says Maitland, "and if you will permit me, I would like to make a suggestion."

"Speak out; time is everything!" says Dr. Carew.

"Everyone should immediately leave the room," Maitland rejoins, "so as to make sure that the body, the weapon, and everything else is left absolutely intact until the medical examiner arrives. Let Messrs. Gates, Willard and Bertram go at once in pursuit of the accomplice. They will, of course, immediately notify the police, and will return here as soon as their mission will permit. There is a telephone just across the hall, and if, as I suppose, Mr. Montrose has a key to the room, I would advise that he immediately notify the medical examiner and the police of what has occurred."

"I will do so at once," says Eric.

"For the rest of us," Maitland continues; "I would suggest that we immediately leave and lock the room,—I noticed the key in the door as I entered,—and await in the hall-way the arrival of the authorities. If this is agreeable to you, gentlemen, I will light the way."

Dr. Carew casts one parting look down into the white, clean-shaven and rigid face so ghastly in the feeble light, and then, turning quickly away, he says:

"Lead on!" and makes his way to the door.

When the last person has left, Maitland, candle in hand, shuts and locks the door, saying:

"The dead body, the weapon, and, so far as we know, everything actually pertaining to the crime, with the single exception of the assassin, or assassins, is now

under lock and key. This door is the only entrance to the room. As a matter of fact there is not even so much as a window, so that, by standing guard here, we shall be able to take oath that everything remains precisely intact within the room."

At this point Eric Montrose comes from one of the rooms to the left of the hallway.

"I have telephoned the medical examiner and police headquarters," he says. "We shall not have long to wait."

"In the meantime, gentlemen," continues Maitland, "if you will permit me to offer yet another suggestion, I would advise that we take the name and address of each one present, as a sort of roll-call to check against the list already in Mr. Bertram's possession. By so doing we shall make sure that everyone is duly accounted for, and not wonder, a few days hence, if such and such a person were really present at this vigil. I have a little pocket diary in which we can write. We will begin with you, Doctor, if you please," and he passes the little book and a stylographic pen to Dr. Carew and holds the candle so that he may see to write.

"Now, if each one, as he finishes, will kindly pass it to the next," Maitland continues as the doctor ceases writing, "I will go along and furnish the light," saying which he passes to the left of Mr. Perry and holds the light so that that gentleman may see to write, and, incidentally, so that he himself may, in the meantime, study the writer's left hand.

The chief object Maitland has in asking for these names and addresses is the excellent opportunity it will afford him to study the left hand of each signer, as he holds the candle. Then, too, he is by no means sure that the assassin may not be one of the proxies not known to any of the stockholders, in which case, he

reasons, it is more than likely he has given a fictitious name at the door. In such an event, investigation at whatever address he may give will immediately lay him under suspicion. Maitland determines to take the earliest opportunity to visit every address given.

John White is the last man to sign. Maitland takes the little book from him and approaches Mrs. Moreton.

"I know you will want to join the rest of us," he says, smiling, "though in your case, of course, it is hardly necessary." She takes the book and writes her name and address.

The man with the candle has found the forefinger with the tell-tale nail! The discovery so horrifies him that he fears lest his face may betray the conflict of emotions going on within him.

. . . . . .

It was but a short time before Dr. Willard returned and added his name to Maitland's list.

Neither Bertram nor Gates came with him.

They had all, the doctor said, seen a man in the distance as they left the building, but although they had gained rapidly upon him, he had disappeared before they could overtake him.

"Did he enter some building?" Maitland asked of Dr. Willard.

"I couldn't say," the other replied. "I fancy I must have made a great mistake in the time. I saw him distinctly before me, and looked down, as I supposed, for barely a second; when I looked up again he was gone! I probably entirely misjudged the length of time I was looking away from him. Such things have happened before, you know."

"Mr. Bertram thought he went into a building upon the corner, away up the street, and Mr. Gates was all but certain he passed on and turned the corner. How-

ever, he slipped us at all events, and that's the main thing;—and not two minutes later I awoke to the fact that both Bertram and Gates had disappeared in what seemed to me almost as unaccountable a manner. It is probable, therefore, that my own mental condition was responsible for both of these singular experiences."

The arrival of the medical examiner and two officers cut short the conversation.

Maitland briefly explained what had occurred and ended by saying:

"We all came out here and locked the door, in order that we might be able to assure you nothing had been tampered with. We have not much to offer you in the way of light, but we may be able, with a little search, to find some more candles inside."

"I have a lamp in the laboratory, if you desire it," interposed Eric.

"By all means let us have it," said the examiner. "We would like you," he continued, addressing Maitland, "and Dr. Carew to accompany us. The rest will please remain here in the hall where we may consult them, if necessary," and he pushed open the door and entered the room, followed by the two officers, and Maitland and Dr. Carew.

"Where did you say the body lay?" asked the examiner, as he locked the door on the inside.

"Right there by the desk," said Maitland, advancing. "He fell with his head—— *My God! the body's gone!*" and with a look of amazement and horror he seized the examiner convulsively by the arm and pointed to the wall, where there was a rude figure traced in blood, into the centre of which the fatal dagger was deeply driven.

"Look there! Note the shape of that daub of blood, and then look upon the dagger blade close below the

hilt. The two figures, you see, are the same;—the same hieroglyph which is scrawled upon the outside door below, the same——" He checked himself. "You see that pool of blood,—that's where we left the corpse! The doctor, here, will tell you the same."

Dr. Carew, however, had sunk limply into a chair at Maitland's weird announcement. He was very pale, and did not appear to comprehend that he was being addressed.

The examiner looked quickly first at one and then at the other, as if to make sure that he was not the victim of a practical joke. He seemed satisfied with his scrutiny, for he said a moment later to the officers:

"It couldn't have been taken through the doorway with all that crowd in the hall, so we've got to depend on the windows for explanation."

"Our friend, the 'Exam.,' thinks it's night, or else that we're a-burnin' daylight for nothin'," said the junior officer in an undertone to his comrade, as he winked his strabismic left eye.

"Why don't you look at the windows, boys?" asked the medical examiner, as he straightened up from scrutinising the stains upon the floor.

"We can't see that there are any," said the elder officer.

"H-m!" exclaimed the examiner, casting a hasty glance about the apartment; "quite right! quite right! Well, that simplifies matters greatly.—That thing over there, that wardrobe, seems to be the only thing, except the desk, big enough to hold anything. Suppose you open that."

One of the officers pressed his finger-tips against a panel of the southernmost door of the wardrobe and attempted to pull it open, but it held fast.

"It's locked," he said. "The blamed thing hasn't

any handle, or I reckon I could pull it open, in spite of that fiddlin' little fastenin'."

"I have a wardrobe something like that," said Maitland; "let me see if my key won't fit this. It's a snap-lock, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered the officer addressed.

Maitland tried all of his keys, but while two of them would enter the lock, none would withdraw the bolt.

"Is it a hollow key?" asked Dr. Carew, coming forward and looking into the keyhole.

"Yes," Maitland responded.

"I have two or three about that size," continued the doctor. "It won't do any harm to try them. That certainly won't do it, though. Ah! this seems more like it;—no, it only turns part way." He picked out another, inserted it in the lock, turned it, and swung the door open.

There was nothing inside but a seersucker office-coat and a clothes-brush!

"Now, if you will help me slide the letterpress cabinet this way," said the doctor, withdrawing his key and swinging the door to so as to make room for that article, "I will see if this will open the other door."

Maitland assisted the doctor, and a moment later the other door of the wardrobe was unlocked and thrown open. In this instance there was not even so much as a clothes-brush in the compartment,—*it was absolutely empty!*

"Well, there's only the desk left; let's try that!" said the examiner, and he attempted to pull out one of the drawers, only to find it locked.

"I reckon that's one o' them take-your-boot-off-to-sneeze desks," said the younger officer. "One o' them fellers where you pull open the centre drawer when you

want somethin' way down in the southeast corner o' the critter. If so I can fix it dead easy. Catch a-hold, Jim, while I see."

The two officers tipped up the desk and the younger man inserted his hand in at the back. This brought to view James Moreton's vest, which had been concealed under the desk, a fact which probably accounted for its not having gone the way the coat went. Maitland carelessly pushed it clear of the desk with his foot. He wished very much to secure some article of Moreton's apparel to use as a scent for bloodhounds, if he could do so without attracting attention.

"Now pull open the centre drawer," the junior officer said, "and we can get into the whole business."

It was indeed so, and a moment later they had removed all the drawers from the desk and placed them in a pile upon the floor. Their search was fruitless. The mystery seemed farther from solution than ever.

"I am convinced," said the examiner slowly, "that there is no man, dead or alive, in this room besides ourselves. It is equally evident that no one could possibly either have entered or left the room by that door without the knowledge of those standing in the hall. If now, as you say, you left the murdered man here, I should like to have you tell me how the assassin or his accomplices, in the short time at their disposal, not only got in and out of here without detection, but took with them the corpse of a full-grown man. There are no windows; no holes in the wall, save those two little narrow register slits, which would not pass a nursing babe; no sky-light; in fact, gentlemen, we are standing in a box which has six walls, and that door is the only hole in any of them large enough to permit the passage of a man! Will you be good enough to tell me how you account for all this?" and he

shot at Maitland a sharp glance of ill-concealed incredulity.

Meanwhile George Maitland had not been idle. He had carefully examined all the walls, investigated the linoleum upon the floor, and satisfied himself as to the ceiling; but he had discovered nothing but the vest which Dr. Carew had stripped from the body, and which he had doubtless thrown beneath the desk in his haste to uncover the wound. Either the others did not observe it as it lay where Maitland had kicked it or they thought it unworthy of notice, and he did not think it wise to call it to their attention.

"I understand perfectly what a tax we have put upon your faith," he said, "and I realise that it is only the fact of our numbers which lends any credence to our story; yet we have told you nothing but the truth. You can hardly be more mystified, more utterly dumfounded, than are we ourselves.

"Mr. Moreton has, for a long time, expected some violence to his person, and he engaged me, many weeks ago, to act in his behalf as a private detective. I regret to say his fears were but too well grounded. He has been murdered in our very midst, and what I had thought would be a very simple case, now becomes, by this new turn of affairs, utterly inexplicable. It seems to me, that for the present at least, this room, as a point of departure, is an utter failure. Dr. Carew has suggested that we lock and seal it for the time being, while we search the surrounding premises, provided that meets with your views and those of the officers," and he stooped and picked up the vest from the floor and threw it carelessly upon the desk. As he did so he noticed in its shadow a folded bit of paper, upon which was a tiny crimson stain. He looked more closely and observed, to his amazement, that this stain was in the form of the

mysterious hieroglyph. This was enough! He hastily crumpled the paper in his hand and put it in his pocket unobserved.

"That suits me, so far as I am concerned," said the examiner. "There is nothing I can do, and so there's not the slightest need of my hanging around here any longer. If you find the body you can telephone me again. What do you say, boys?" he asked, turning to the officers.

"It's the d——dest case I ever had anything to do with," replied the elder man. "I'm for bottling everything up, as the gentleman says, and reporting to headquarters."

"That's me, too," replied his companion.

"Shall we say anything to those outside about the disappearance of the body?" asked Maitland, as they paused at the door while the examiner was unlocking it.

"No; mum's the word for the present," replied the senior officer. "They'll find out soon enough."

"By the way, you'll want paper and sealing-wax," said Maitland, as if the thought had just occurred to him. "They're both on the desk; I'll go get them," and he left them at the door and went back into the room. He reached for the stick of sealing-wax with one hand while with the other he deftly folded the vest into a little wad and stuffed it into his pocket, covering the whole movement with his body. Then he seized a few sheets of blank paper, and, hastening back to the door, left the room with the rest.

"We can strip this paper up and seal it to the door and to the casing, unless somebody has some string," said Maitland when they were all in the hall and the examiner had locked the door behind them.

"Here's string, if you want it," said the junior officer, producing a little tangle of white twine.

"That's just the thing," said Maitland. "Now we'll put these across so, and seal them down. I have a seal-ring and you"—addressing the senior officer—"can use the intaglio cameo, there, on your left hand," saying which he proceeded to seal a short section of string, one end to the casing and the other to the door, pressing his own ring into the wax at either end of the string. Then he repeated the operation with another string, applied to another portion of the door, except that, in this case, he pressed the officer's cameo into both daubs of wax.

And so he alternated them, until four strings and four strips of paper had been applied, half of each being sealed with Maitland's ring and the rest with the officer's cameo.

This done, the examiner passed the key to the senior officer. This functionary stationed himself at the head of the stairs as the stockholders prepared to leave and wrote down the name and address of each person who passed him. Then with his brother-officer and the examiner he departed to report at headquarters.

To say that George Maitland was utterly dumfounded would be to convey but a tithe of the fact. He had, he told himself, no sooner found, in the most unexpected,—the most disconcerting quarter,—the left forefinger which had marked the corpse, than he had lost the corpse which the left forefinger had marked. If the discovery had horrified and pained him, the loss seemed, so far as this sad affair was concerned, to unmoor all his faculties and set his reason hopelessly adrift.

EPISODE FOURTH

The Corpus Delicti

CHAPTER I

The human mind, being the evolved product of forces acting in obedience to natural law, requires for its healthful maintenance a perfect faith in the absolute supremacy of that law. Any dogma, whether it call itself scientific or religious, which through the intervention of caprice—Divine or human—weakens that faith, can have but one effect,—the breaking down of the intellect upon which the awful parasite fastens itself. The terrible prevalence of religious mania in our asylums is not altogether without a retroactive significance. To the scientifically trained mind an apparent break in Nature's uniformity is like a blow in the face. For the nonce it stings the sensibilities and staggers the reason.

"WELL, Doc, what do you say?" were Maitland's first words as he entered Dr. Willard's rooms on the eventful evening of June thirteenth.

"I *don't* say, George," replied Dr. Willard gravely, "except that it's all dreadful,—very, very dreadful!"

Utter helplessness sometimes lends to strong characters an air of flippancy, as if the very futility of *all* acts gave them a devil-may-care indifference as to which *one* they selected.

Some of the most horrent pages in history, sodden with human blood, present luridly eloquent examples in point.

George Maitland, who felt as if the very laws of matter had, in some mysterious way, been utterly set aside, found his faculties drifting, as it were, among an incoherent mass of wreckage,—the flotsam and jetsam of what he had but yesterday held to be incontestable truths.

"Did you, in all your experience, ever hear of anything more utterly inexplicable?" he asked. "The

mere fact of Moreton's assassination is, as you say, dreadful, but one can readily see how any one of his many enemies might have accomplished it. The thing that entirely flabbergasts me in connection with the murder *per se* is the manner in which it was done. Here is John White just about to seize Moreton, when off goes a pistol, out go the lights, and down goes Moreton with a dagger driven as accurately through his heart as though a surgeon had carefully placed it there in broad daylight! One doesn't need, of course, to be told that the distance must have been measured to a nicety and the blow neatly calculated before the lights went out."

"But even so," replied the doctor, "the mystery remains as deep as ever, unless, indeed, you accept Dr. Carew's theory that the pistol-shot was the signal by which an accomplice notified his principal that the lights were about to be cut off. I confess I can find no other explanation which seems to me to have anything whatever in its favour."

"Well, don't let a little thing like that worry you, Doc," Maitland replied. "Just listen to me and I'll give you a conundrum that'll last you for the rest of your natural life, I fancy; only you must promise to keep what I tell you an inviolable secret for the present. To be frank, I shouldn't feel I had a right to tell even you, were it not that I need your assistance."

"I'll be as dumb as 'Silence cut in alabaster,'" said the doctor reassuringly.

"All right then, prepare for a surprise," said Maitland. "You remember how we five, Dr. Carew, the medical examiner, the two officers and I, went back into the room to examine the body?"

"Certainly."

"*Well, it had disappeared!*"

"Impossible!"

"Precisely that; yet it was gone."

"But there are no windows and only the one door with all of us waiting outside of it!"

"Quite so; yet the body was not to be found."

"Nonsense! You should have searched the room."

"So we should—and so we did."

"Somebody must have hidden the body in the room!"

"Indeed, and who, pray?"

"The assassin or some accomplice, of course."

"But the assassin left with us."

"We don't know it, do we?"

"Well, I should say so; we cleared the room."

"Might he not have been hidden somewhere?"

"No; but suppose he were. How did he get out and how did he get the dead body out? The corpse weighs one hundred and sixty-five pounds if it does an ounce."

"He didn't get out. He concealed both himself and the corpse right there. You should have ransacked everything."

"What, for instance?"

"I have it! The big wardrobe! That's the explanation!"

"Both doors were locked," said Maitland, with a smile.

"What of that?" the doctor replied. "The key was doubtless on the person of the murdered man. The assassin could easily have found it."

"In the dark?"

"You don't know that he was in the dark."

"He must have been precious near it, or some of us would have seen the light under the door. You must have seen *our* light, when we were in there."

"Yes, I noticed it, but you had a big lamp. A small

candle would have been quite another matter. The wardrobe's the solution of the mystery, you can bank on it!"

"Very well, then; we examined *that* thoroughly. It contained only a seersucker coat and a clothes-brush. What else?"

"The desk!"

"Took every drawer out of it, and even scrutinised the skeleton frame. Try again!"

"The letterpress stand!"

"That little thing for a live man and a corpse! However, we lifted it. It didn't weigh over seventy-five pounds. Once more."

"The ventilator slits in the wall."

"Three inches wide and thirty-six inches long. I measured both of them. What next?"

"I'm down to the supernatural and the fourth dimension of space," and the expression of Dr. Willard's countenance indicated that he had, indeed, struck the bedrock of his wits.

"And well you may be!" Maitland replied. "When that burly ruffian disappeared from the shanty over there in Jersey like a dematerialised spirit, it just about disrupted my scientific faith in the consistencies of mundane existence; and when Mr. Moreton told me of the second disappearance of the same assailant,—this time from the very house in which his wife was staying,—I was all but ready to throw up the sponge. And now Pelion is piled on Ossa! Not only do the murderers themselves disappear like air-drawn figures, but they must needs take their victim with them! It just gives me goose-flesh to think of it! What are we 'up against,' Doc?"

"Don't ask me, George; I can't fathom it!" replied the other helplessly. "In all these experiences the thing

that utterly staggers us is the apparent ease with which the corporeal is made to take on incorporeality."

"I say, Ned, you know there are some who believe certain people possess the ability to render themselves invisible. Do you suppose there can be anything in it? There are thousands who think so," and Maitland bestowed a quizzical look upon the doctor.

"George," replied that gentleman slowly, "most heads are hostelries for the accommodation of transients,—road-houses which take in whatever comes along, and no questions asked."

"By Jove, Ned, that's so!" exclaimed Maitland. "I've got to find some explanation, though, consistent with the fundamental attributes of matter,—I think I'll say now the *alleged* fundamental attributes of matter,—or I shall lose my twentieth-century scientific footing and slip back more than twenty centuries into rank Pyrrhonism. From doubting the evidence of one's senses to doubting one's doubts is not such a very long stride, you know. However, be that as it may, I'm not going to have recourse to the supernatural until I have given the natural every possible opportunity to prove its sufficiency; and this leads me to my errand: I'm going to see if a bloodhound can ascertain where that corpse was taken to. I've the murdered man's vest for a scent."

"Which is more than it will be worth, George; for how can a dog follow a trail over which a body was carried?" asked Dr. Willard dubiously. "It seems to me what you need is something belonging to the fellow who removed the body; then the hound would have something by which to track his quarry."

"My dear Ned," rejoined Maitland, laying his hand playfully upon his friend's shoulder, "for specifying ideal conditions you are, I assure you, quite the thing!—

However, since the murderer, if there were but one, left us neither his photograph nor his boots, we shall have to do what we can with the dead man's vest.—Understand, I don't expect much. Still, matter can't be annihilated,—at least I used to think so,—and there's more than one hundred and sixty-five pounds of what was James Moreton to be accounted for. He was taken from the building in some way,—I don't pretend even to guess how,—while we were in the hallway. We know the assassin left the room with us when we went into the hall, for I procured, at that time, or a little later, the signature of every man who attended the meeting, with the exception of the murdered president and his two clerks, and we know these two clerks left the building with you. It is clear, therefore, that the removal of the body must have been the work of an accomplice, or of accomplices. Dr. Carew's theory of a principal in the room and an accessory without seems to be about the only rational,—or rather let us say, the least irrational,—view we can take of this mystery. The fact that the murdered man not only had a dagger thrust through his heart, but also had an ugly wound in his back between the shoulders, leads me now to believe that there must have been two assassins concerned in the actual murder, and two weapons used."

"I can't see the slightest reason for thinking this," said Dr. Willard, with a puzzled look.

"Just consider these data for a moment," George replied. "One thrust pierced the heart and must, therefore, have caused instant death. This blow must have been given last, if but one weapon were used, for the dagger was left in the wound. It could not, of course, have been removed and reinserted. Even assuming that two weapons were used, it is all but certain this was the first blow given."

"I don't see why," interjected the doctor.

"There are several reasons," the other continued. "I will cite one or two of the more important. No blow was given until the room was plunged in utter darkness. Now, either wound would have proved fatal, and this is the same as saying that they were both exceedingly well placed, the front one of course ideally so. This can only be accounted for, it seems to me, upon the assumption that each thrust was carefully planned and measured before the light was extinguished, and delivered instantly thereafter. It is inconceivable to me that one man could, in the dark, have inflicted the wound in the back, and then have gotten around on the other side of his victim and driven the weapon, *with mathematical accuracy*, directly through his heart."

"But might not the victim himself have turned as soon as he felt the dagger in his back?" asked the doctor.

"Ah! but don't you see," Maitland exclaimed, "that we must not seek to account for the remarkable accuracy of the heart-blow on the theory that it was planned and measured before the light went out, and then assume that conditions were so changed in the darkness as to vitiate all the assassin's calculations? If we hold that the victim moved in the least between the time the light was extinguished and the dagger reached his heart, we have left the marvellous precision of the blow entirely out of the question."

"I didn't think of that," said the doctor.

"If you advance the idea of one assassin and two daggers, maintaining that the heart-blow was given, the weapon left in the wound, and that the murderer then passed behind his victim and inflicted the second stab in the back, I shall contend that his victim would have fallen to the floor before he could have accomplished

such a feat. He fell upon his back, so we know the second wound was not inflicted while he lay upon the floor. Again, the finger-marks upon the murdered man's neck, taken in connection with the victim's cry for help, show conclusively that the first attack was a frontal one, and the nature of these imprints was such as to indicate that the assailant must have held his victim at least several seconds. I am not telling you quite all I know about these finger-prints either. There are other things which I might also mention, but I think I have said enough to convince you that there were two principals concerned in this affair.—However, that does not materially modify the immediate problem in hand, for whether, as the German said, there were 'eleven or three,' they all left the room with us, and all but you, Gates, and Bertram remained in the hall outside until the arrival of the medical examiner. I have, excepting only Bertram and Gates, the names and addresses of every man Jack of you,—yes, and of one Mrs. Jack,—in this little book," and he exhibited the small diary he had used for the signatures.

"Well, then, let's come down to the accomplice," suggested the doctor.

"We shall have to, if I am to answer your objection in regard to the scent," Maitland rejoined. "I am proceeding upon the assumption that if the body were removed by one man, it was, in all probability, dragged away, since it would have been too heavy for any ordinary man otherwise to handle. If two men removed it, it would still be found heavy, and they would have been all but certain to have put it down occasionally to get a fresh hold, if not to rest. In either of these cases there is a chance for the dog. Are you ready? We can discuss the matter further, as we proceed. I would like to be on the ground by the time it is dark."

"Shall we need anything I have?" asked the doctor, as he prepared to leave.

"Yes," replied his companion, "you might take your little hand electric light along. We'll probably need it."

The doctor put a cylindrical affair in his pocket and the two men then left the apartment.

CHAPTER II

In criminology focal points of guilt must be found by a sort of intersection of clues, even as the centre of a circle is located from a portion of its circumference: wherefore, the astute detective much prefers that his findings possess at least sufficient angular divergence from one another to safely lift them out of the abortive parallel.

It was quite dark when George Maitland and Dr. Willard reached No. 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City.

The arc light in front of the rookery made the shadows cast by the building so dense that the eye completely lost itself in their taciturn depths. The two men led the dog around to the little stairway-door at the side of the shanty and gave him the scent. He put his muzzle to the ground and immediately started off, making straight for the street.

"Just as I expected," said Maitland. "It's the trail made by Moreton in coming to the meeting. Let's go 'round to the back and try him again."

This plan was adopted, but without any profitable result.

"I'm afraid this counts as a failure, George," said Dr. Willard.

"There's one more chance left," Maitland replied. "We'll go out quite a bit along the trail he has already discovered, and lead him in a big circle around the place. If we intersect any other trail he will let us know it."

This plan they followed. When they reached a point some little distance west of the rookery the dog struck a scent and bounded off. He led them straight out into the open lot at the back of the building. Maitland

saw by the dog's action that there was no doubt about the trail.

"He's got it, all right!" he said excitedly to the doctor.

The dog had gone but a few hundred feet, however, before he paused irresolutely, sniffing first the ground and then the air.

"Either the trail ends there or he's lost his scent!" Maitland exclaimed.

"Ends there! surely you don't think——"

"—They may have picked the body up here," interrupted Maitland. "Let's see if he can get the scent farther along."

But, try as they might, they were unable to get the dog to indicate any trail beyond the point at which he had originally lost the scent.

"Do you think it possible they could have buried the body here?" asked the doctor, as they returned again to the place where the hound stopped.

"Possibilities don't appear to cut any figure in this case, Doc," replied Maitland. "We're trying to explain the *im*possible, aren't we? Well, then, why shouldn't we look to the inconceivable for help?—Let's have your lamp, till we see if the earth has been disturbed."

He took the cylinder the doctor passed to him and carefully examined the ground.

"There hasn't a pebble been turned over, that I can see,—and certainly no one has recently dug here. Hello, what's this?" and he held an old wine bottle up to view. "Turpentine, as I'm a living sinner!" he ejaculated, after applying his nose to it.

"Turpentine! Are you sure of it?"

"Sure of it! Is there ever any doubt about turpentine?" George replied. "Wouldn't you think this were the Darrow case, Doc? Of course, it may be just

a coincidence, but—well, it ends the dog. He can't follow a trail obscured by turpentine, so we may as well call the jig up, and 'depart in peace,' as my big-jawed assailant recommended, as soon as I drive a stake to locate this place. I say, Ned, I can tell you something about the effect of drugs that I'll wager you don't know."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the doctor, as they sauntered off. "I'll not believe it. What is it?"

"The smell of turpentine sometimes so excites people that they can't 'sleep o' nights.'"

. . . . . .

Long before the first mail on the morning of June 14th,—the day after the stockholders' meeting,—George Maitland received by special delivery the following typewritten letter:

"New York, June 13, 19—.

"GEORGE MAITLAND, ESQ.

"SIR: This opportunity is taken of informing you that in attempting to ferret out the murderer or murderers of James Eldredge Moreton you are placing your own life in peril. You will not be permitted to succeed. *You are a marked man.* Your every movement is watched by one (if not more) whose scent is keener than the hound you employed. The day on which you make any real progress toward the solution of this riddle will be your doomsday. Your death will not be necessary to this plan of vengeance, unless you make it so. Be warned, therefore, in time. Cease your meddling and live;—continue it, and nothing can save you.

"NEMESIS."

To the left of the last word was the strange hieroglyph with which Maitland was already so familiar.

He read and re-read the letter with scrupulous care. He dared not show it to his wife, as he knew it would greatly alarm her. He did not in the least minimise to himself the imminence of his own danger, but his self-

respect would not for a moment brook the suggestion that he let these anonymous threats alter his course "in the estimation of a hair." He was considering what crying urgency had led the writer to send his letter by special delivery, when his wife entered the room.

"Here are the morning papers, dear," she said. "I suppose you will want to see what they have to say about the Moreton mystery before you breakfast?"

"Yes, if you don't mind, dear," and he unfolded *The Herald* and passed his eye hurriedly over the first page. "There's nothing new there. They haven't learned of the disappearance of the body. All they say in connection with the examination is: 'Dr. Chalmers made a careful inspection of the remains almost immediately after the murder. He has made no report for publication.' Hello! What's this?"

"Most astounding development in the Moreton mystery. Thieves rifle the dead man's Broad Street office and crack his safe during the night. Indisputable evidence that both the murder and the robbery were the work of the cleverest and most desperate gang of crooks which has ever infested New York. It is believed that someone enjoying the murdered financier's confidence must have assisted in the robbery. The police look for an early arrest, and most sensational developments may be confidently expected, when the inevitable woman in the case makes her appearance.—Police orders are now: '*cherchez la femme.*'"

Maitland threw down the paper.

"I shall have to forego breakfast, dear, and hurry down to Broad Street! Good-bye!" and with a parting kiss he hastened from the house.

CHAPTER III

To meet the man himself is not to know him. His real biography is written by his ancestors before he is born, for natural selection is but the compound interest of tendency.

THE sight which greeted Maitland upon his entrance to the Moreton offices in the Johnston Building literally took away his breath. Confusion and destruction seemed to vie with each other for first place. Books and papers, torn, crumpled, and piled in wildest disorder, littered the floors. The baize upon the fine large tables was slit into shreds, while the leathern chair-backs and bottoms had great pieces cut out of them,—pieces shaped thus:

The pictures upon the walls had their frames wrenched asunder and their canvases cut into shreds, save in the case of James Moreton's portrait. The marauders had cut the eyes out of the face of this picture and pinned them over the diamond studs in its shirt-bosom. The mirror lay shattered upon the floor and every chair lacked an arm, leg, back, or some other convenient or necessary portion of its anatomy. Even the rugs upon the floor had been cut, and the contents of ink bottles had been poured upon them, upon the books and papers, and thrown against the walls and fixtures.

The safe, which had stood in a recess in the corner, had been moved out into the centre of the room. A great hole yawned in the front near the combination lock, and globules of molten metal were imbedded in little charred recesses in the floor.

The two officers whom Maitland had met the day before

were among those engaged in examining the premises when he arrived. Mr. Charles Bertram, pallid and tremulous, was answering their questions.

"Mr. Moreton," he said, "went to the Bank and to the Trust Company just before the meeting yesterday, and drew out a very large sum of money to cover a transaction about which he had dictated a letter to me that very morning. We had to hurry away to get ready for the meeting, so he didn't go to the vault, but put the money here in the safe, and locked it. I saw him put the bag carefully in this compartment, close and lock this little door, and put the key in his pocket. Then he swung to the big door and locked that, after which we closed the office for the day, and all left for the meeting."

"All left for the meeting? Was there anyone here besides you and Mr. Moreton?" asked James Sheehan, the elder of the two officers Maitland had met at 163 Lombrose Street.

"Yes; my assistant, Mr. Gates, was here."

"Did he know of the money?"

"Oh! yes, sir; he saw it put in the safe, same as I did."

"And where is he now?"

"I don't know, sir; he has not come down yet. He probably did not hear of the robbery as early as I did."

"You spoke of a letter dictated to you by Mr. Moreton yesterday morning. You have a copy of it, I suppose?"

"I have the original, sir, if I can find it. I was to hold it until we procured the express company's receipt this morning."

Charles Bertram examined the debris upon the floor, and finally unearthed the object of his search. "There it is, sir," he said to Officer Sheehan, passing him a letter.

The officer took it and read as follows:

"New York, June 14, ———

"Mr. Wilfred Tuttle,
"10— Dearborn St.,
"Chicago, Ill.

"Dear Sir: I beg to acknowledge your favour of the 10th inst., stating the form in which you wish the Haswell remittance made.

"In compliance with your wishes, I am sending you, by Adams Express, Four Hundred Nine Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($409,500.00), being the amount received for Mrs. Haswell's securities less my commission for selling same.

"Regretting that there should have been any misunderstanding in this matter, I remain, dear sir,

"Very truly yours,
"James Eldredge Moreton."

"Were your relations with Mr. Moreton pleasant?"

Mr. Bertram's face turned a shade paler, but he replied promptly:

"Yes, sir, quite pleasant."

"Do you know how this robbery was first discovered?"

"I have read the newspaper report—the janitor thought he smelled smoke and came in to investigate."

"And then what?"

"Two masked men seized him while a third pressed a sponge to his face. When he came to himself he was alone."

"Have you any theory as to why so many things were wantonly injured?"

"No, sir; except that it seems to me it must have been done for spite. I can see no other reason," and "Charlie Bert" looked as if he were on the rack.

"How do you think that safe was opened?"

"I have no idea, sir; except that it looks as if a hole had been blown in it by some powerful explosive."

The officers glanced significantly at one another.

"Did you ever see a hole blown in metal by an explosive?"

"No, sir, never;—at least never before."

"Did you not observe that this metal had been melted away?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know anything about those electric wires, there, outside the window."

"No, sir; nothing."

"Where do you live?"

"On Jerome Avenue, Harlem."

"Did you spend last night at home?"

The young man hesitated.

"Not last night, no, sir. It was after twelve before I got home."

"Where were you?"

"I—I was visiting a—a lady."

"Where?"

"On West Forty-eighth Street."

"Did anyone see you when you returned home?"

"No, sir. They were all asleep; I used my latchkey."

"You say you were visiting a lady here on West Forty-eighth Street? What is her name?"

It was some time before the young man replied.

"Her name is Eichberg—Miss Rachel Eichberg."

"*Rachel Eichberg!*"

The exclamation came involuntarily from Maitland, who had all this while been carefully examining the room, and making notes in his memorandum book.

At the mention of Miss Eichberg's name the two officers smiled and exchanged significant glances. Maitland at once perceived that they had heard of the lady before. He had been kneeling in front of the safe brushing something from the floor on to a little slip of paper when his involuntary exclamation had escaped him. He had immediately arisen and now came forward.

"If you do not mind, gentlemen, I would like to ask Mr. Bertram a question or two."

"As many as you like, Mr. Maitland," replied one of the officers affably.

"You kept Mr. Moreton's books, did you not?" Maitland began, addressing the clerk.

"Yes, sir," replied Charles Bertram, as the colour again left his face.

"Have you and Mr. Moreton had any recent conversation in regard to these books?"

"No, sir;—that is—he asked—just before his death he asked me for a statement of some of his accounts."

"And you furnished it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Mr. Moreton comment upon it?"

"No, sir; not to me."

"The books of account, I suppose, are still here?"

"Yes, sir; that is they were last night."

"Will you please satisfy yourself whether or not they are here now?"

Again Mr. Bertram searched the debris upon the floor while Maitland and the officers awaited the result of his examination.

"I'm bettin' he don't find 'em," said Officer Burke in an undertone. "If he's one of the Eichberg's followers, it's dollars to doughnuts there's queer entries in them books."

"If they are not here it will look rather bad for him, eh?" asked Officer Sheehan of Maitland.

George made no answer to this question, but said instead:

"I picked up a little slip of paper yesterday that had something upon it which I am confident pertains to the case. It is typewritten, and I regard it as most important, and think you should have a copy of it. I will write it out for you."

"I reckon we'll need all we can get, eh, Burke?" said the senior officer.

"It looks so now," replied his companion.

Maitland went to the machine and wrote slowly,—so slowly one could have counted every key pressed,—for several minutes. Then he compared the copy carefully with the original, drew a little design upon it with a red pencil, folded it, and passed it to Officer Sheehan, saying:

"You can peruse it at your leisure."

The officer transferred the folded paper to his pocket without opening it.

At this juncture Charles Bertram came forward with a pile of books in his arms and said, to the evident chagrin of Officer Burke:

"They are all here, Mr. Maitland."

"Please see if any of the pages have been removed or rendered illegible," George requested.

After examining the books for some time, the clerk replied:

"There are no mutilations, so far as I can see."

"I am glad of that. I shall wish to examine these books a little later;" and Maitland looked quickly at the clerk.

He was unable, however, to see his face, for the young man had just then let fall some of the books, and was stooping to pick them up. In recovering the first lot, he lost two others. He seemed experiencing some sort of nervous shock, for he fumbled in a most unmistakable manner in his attempts to pick up the fallen books.

"Was it because of your acquaintance with Miss Eichberg that she became a stockholder in The International Wireless?"

"Yes, sir. She had a little money and wanted to take a 'flier' in stocks. I advised International Wireless."

"Did you ever meet Mr. John White previous to yesterday?"

"Yes, sir, once; but not to know his name."

"Where was that?"

Again a crimson wave suffused the young man's face.

"I found him with Miss Eichberg a few evenings ago when I called."

"And you did not learn his name?"

"No, sir,—I was not introduced,—in fact,—well, there was some little friction between us, and—and I came away to—to prevent a scene."

"Ah, I see! Was Mr. White fond of Miss Eichberg?"

"He certainly acted as if he were!" and there was unmistakable bitterness in the young man's tone.

"Do you know how he came to be Miss Eichberg's proxy?"

"No, sir; I know nothing whatever about him further than I have already stated."

"Not even his business?"

"Not even his business."

"Have you ever noticed, on the beardless portions of his face, an elaborate, blue tracery?"

"Yes, sir. It caught my attention the first time I saw him."

"Did it lead you to conjecture anything concerning his history, his antecedents, or his nationality?"

"I thought he might be a sailor,—perhaps an Italian sailor; for it was plain to be seen that he was not an American."

"Will you kindly let me have the key to this little fire-proof closet?"

"I—I haven't the key to that;—it was Mr. Moreton's private closet and—and he never gave me a key to it."

"Please lend me your key-ring; perhaps a key to something else may open this."

Mr. Bertram seemed to Maitland to be very loath to comply with this request, but he at length passed him his bunch of keys. The very first one George tried opened the door. The closet appeared to contain little or nothing besides books and pamphlets.

"Do you know what there is in here?" Maitland continued.

"No, sir."

George now unwrapped the little slip of paper containing the few shining silver-like grains mixed with some darker powder which he had so recently scraped from the floor, and held it open before Mr. Bertram.

"Do you know how this came upon the floor?"

"No, sir."

"Is there anything like this used in connection with the new telephone system,—say, in the coherer?"

"The new system has no coherer."

"Indeed! Sure enough. And you have never noticed any of this about here before?"

"Never, sir."

"Thank you. I think that is all. You will please get together and lock up all the office books so we may be able to find them when needed. You will, of course, preserve all papers, documents, etc., in fact everything."

"Certainly."

"You will wish to take charge of the room, I suppose," said Maitland to the officers, who seemed unable to conceal their impatience to be off.

"Yes, we shall bottle everything up tight when we leave."

"Then you had better collect the books now, I think," said Maitland to the clerk, "as you will not be able to

have free access here after the officers leave, for several days,—possibly longer."

While Mr. Bertram was collecting the articles mentioned, Officer Sheehan said to Maitland in an undertone not intended for the clerk's ear:

"That silver stuff—do you think that has any significance whatever in this case?"

"If it's what I think it is, it certainly has," replied Maitland, in a low voice.

"What! Isn't it silver, then?" asked the officer.

"I should say not, but I can't be positive just what it is until I get back to my laboratory," returned Maitland.

"And if it's what you think it is?" interposed Officer Burke.

"It will tell us how the safe was opened," George replied.

"We know that already," said Officer Sheehan.

"Indeed?" There was unmistakable surprise in Maitland's tone.

"Sure!" said Burke. "One look at the thing tells that; a hole was melted through the door."

"But how, how melted?" George asked.

"How? There isn't but one way it *could* be melted, short of an iron foundry," said Officer Sheehan.

"And that is?" persisted Maitland.

"By electricity," he answered. "They just put one pole on to the safe, touched the front with the other pole, drew out an arc, and the juice did the rest."

"And how much current do you think this would take?" George questioned.

"No more than those wires out there would carry, I reckon," replied Sheehan.

"Ah! you have examined them, of course, and found where the shunt circuit was laid on?"

"Not we; we're trying to learn something we don't already know."

"Well, if you'll call on me about two hours from date," said George, as he arose to depart, "I think I may be able to oblige you," and he left the office.

Officer Burke looked at Officer Sheehan with derision writ large all over his broad, Celtic countenance.

"Huh! he didn't know how the safe was cracked!" he said with a subdued guffaw.

"And they call him a great sleuth over in Boston!" replied Sheehan.

"Lord bless you! It's lucky he's from the Hub, though!" exclaimed Burke.

"Why?" innocently asked the other.

"'Cause otherwise he wouldn't know beans!" and Officer Burke was all but convulsed with his own wit.

"I say, Jim," he said, when he was at length able to speak, "what's on the paper the sleuth attached so much importance to, that he thought we ought to have a copy of it?"

"I didn't look at it," said Officer Sheehan, diving into several pockets and finally producing a little paper neatly folded. "Read it out, Burke."

That worthy unfolded the paper and this is what he saw:

A$l87fFI 5hubs5 VK9;4g7fRKT"6dF? 24EDxp,p, 9;cY QE5 p,$ry%eq P?9;BLMCW&9;qz3f ZQ5h be9;4g wEx MDwExqz5s p,l8V?"T BZ9;VKqz7f4g7kZBU$ wEx 6dj-vymt5hpi'DEwV?DUp,5sAT f7d6l8wED?VJEp,f3 4aFI9;ez5s (lIf34g(lI5s?VQGP&AB9hp,wED6d 18ez f72dj-ABs5 5hbuf3 p,3fKVEJf7FI 9;SY 8l5hez MDDEwzes5 9r 8lze wED BA9;F?f78lV?7kDEwh58l9;?V ;9YS h5IFs5 a4f3ezf73f6dV? a4EDwp,p, 9;WH QE5 p,ry$qe% MK: RXg4DExa4 wEDx RKR(l-I9;h5tms5F?7kcqT"' beg4;9.B 'Eubs5 h59;(Il 9;HW 7ftm8lez lI(3f4gIl(f3VKAT8lAB9hp,DxEd6 f7;9 U$IFs5 v,J K:m ta mK: BZ9;d6F?s56d ;9be 5hbus5 CM9h8lp,vwl8V?vy mK: bHKs5DExcq7kd6s5 ctd69;BL 7ftmj-ze ZB9;4gF?f34g 9h(lI h5FI3f mt6j(Il9;7f5s?V7kcqT"' ,pqe% WHh5 i5 QGP&DUKm:

CHAPTER IV

There are a few things in this world which change their kind in changing their degree. Thus does it occasionally happen, that while a certain amount of a desirable article constitutes a pleasant affluence, a superabundance thereof plunges its possessor into virtual poverty. Blessings which speak too loudly have thus the full force of curses.

"I TELL you what it is, Ned, it's quite possible to have too much of a good thing."

"I admit the generality, George," replied the doctor, "but I don't quite see its application to the case we are discussing."

"You don't, eh? Well your defect of vision is easily remedied. The great majority of cases which puzzle the authorities owe their difficulty to lack of apparent motive. You know how it was in the Darrow affair. Well, in this Moreton mystery just the reverse is the case. We have motive *galore*. Suppose now, someone were to kill the Devil. Don't you see how hard it would be to locate the assassin, just because so many would be found to have good and sufficient motives! Where would you begin to look in such a case?"

"Why, among the clergy, of course, you irreverent rascal!" said the doctor, with a laugh.

"Nonsense! Why, you wouldn't be any better on a case than an ordinary policeman. Don't you know it's the Devil's fires that keep the religious pot boiling? But seriously, now, the death of his Satanic Majesty would be extremely like the Moreton affair."

"You are not very complimentary to the dead," rejoined the doctor.

"Maybe not," George replied: "but facts have the habit of siding with truth, despite all protests of sentiment, and I don't believe a villain becomes a saint just by losing his animal heat. Mr. Moreton,—who, by the way, enjoyed the soubriquet of 'Dog Moreton,'—was a man who made a great many enemies. First: there is Eric Montrose. I myself heard him give vent to something very like a threat. Moreton, when he was stricken down, was just about to consummate, by the most outrageous trickery, an act which would spell ruin to Eric. The murder was committed just in time to thwart this nefarious scheme. There's a good motive right there. Now take John White. He had quarrelled with Moreton and was in the very act of advancing to assault him when the lights went out. Of course, on the assumption that the deed was long premeditated, White's quarrel, since it was precipitated by Moreton himself just before his death, could not be held to furnish a motive. If, on the other hand, we could make ourselves believe that which seems to me entirely out of the question, viz., that the murder was the result of immediate anger, John White's motive would be unquestionable. If now, White did the deed as the result of premeditation, we have some marvellous examples of coincidence for which to account. Now take Mrs. Moreton——"

"—Mrs. Moreton!" exclaimed the doctor, aghast at the very thought; "you surely do not propose to waste your time suspecting that queenly woman."

"Oho!—But we're not engaged in the pleasant occupation of *suspecting*, Ned; we're just looking for possible motive. You mustn't forget, however, that when it does come to a question of suspicion, I know beyond a peradventure whose hands left the imprints upon the victim's throat——"

"George! you don't mean——"

"—I don't mean, my dear Ned, to horrify you by telling you the facts at this juncture," replied Maitland, with no attempt to conceal the evasion. "What I meant to say is that Mrs. James Moreton did not live with her husband. They had had conjugal difficulties, and the man had sued for divorce, naming Elbert Reiss as co-respondent. The trial was set for to-day. The plaintiff, you see, was gotten rid of just in time to stop this suit. Now I feel quite confident that two people were immediately concerned in this murder, and here are two who *might* be mutually interested. Understand, I say '*might*,' I don't say that they were, or even that I think they were. Again, I am morally certain that the weapon which pierced James Moreton's heart was so similar to the dagger in Reiss's picture as to be indistinguishable from it at a very short distance. I know that Mrs. Moreton and Reiss had had at least one private interview upon an important matter, for I was at Reiss's studio when the lady called and asked to see him alone. More than this: I learned from Mr. Bertram that, on the afternoon previous to the assassination, Mrs. Moreton called upon her husband at his office. On this occasion Mr. Moreton asked him to bring him his will, which he had altered since his trouble began with his wife. He spread it open before the lady, but she declined to peruse it, and he read enough of it to her to show her that she need hope for little or nothing from it. I asked Mr. Bertram if there were any other will, and he showed me a copy of one made just after his employer's marriage. Apart from a few small family bequests it was all 'my beloved Marie.' I questioned the clerk also as to why his employer had recently altered his will and why he had taken the pains to acquaint his wife of the fact. He informed me that Mr. Moreton had been convinced, by letters and otherwise, that his

life was in imminent danger, and that this fact had induced him to attend closely both to his will and to his life insurance policies. These latter had originally all had Mrs. Moreton as a beneficiary, but he had recently had them altered, too. I reminded him that he had not told me why he thought Mr. Moreton had shown the new will to his wife, and he said; 'Mr. Moreton was twice assaulted, and the last time his assailant took refuge in the house where his wife was staying. I have reason to believe he thought her in some way connected with these attempts upon his life, and wished to show her that their success would not in the least help her purse.'"

"Did you see this new will?" asked the doctor.

"No; that's the most significant part of it," replied Maitland. "This will disappeared in the robbery. Let us now consider Reiss as acting upon his own initiative. What motive could he have? Naturally he does not feel very pleasant over the disagreeable publicity to which the divorce suit has subjected him. Then, you know what you yourself witnessed at the little supper at the Waldorf. Besides this I was present at a quarrel between Moreton and Reiss in which the former did his best to kill the artist. On this occasion Reiss made a contingent threat upon Moreton's life, so that the evidence of bad-blood—or hatred amounting to virulence—is not to be gainsaid. You know, doubtless, that Moreton was deeply infatuated with Miss Sherwood; while Reiss is madly in love with her. Murder has been done many a time before with far less motive. Then we have Mr. Charles Bertram and his assistant, Mr. Gates, to consider."

"What possible motive could they have for killing the man who gave them employment?" questioned the doctor.

"Let me tell you a few things I have heard about Ber-

tram, and then see if you cannot answer your own question," replied Maitland. "He is a good deal more than just a *clerk*, let me assure you. I am told that he has great surgical skill, enjoys quite a local reputation as a 'strong man,' and plays a superb game of chess. His keeping of Moreton's books was hardly more than an incident, it would seem. Quite a while ago he began keeping company with Miss Rachel Eichberg, familiarly called by the police 'The Eichberg.' This woman's tastes are notoriously extravagant, and she had ruined many a man before she met young Bertram. Well, a bookkeeper's salary didn't go far with 'The Eichberg,' so 'Charlie Bert,' as his friends call him, began dabbling in stocks, and a little later he indulged in the questionable habit of borrowing his employer's money and paying it back with false entries. I've spent but a few hours on his books, yet I've already found defalcations amounting to thousands of dollars. Goodness only knows what the expert accountant will unearth! Now, add to this that Mr. Moreton, according to Bertram's own admission, asked for a statement of his financial status just before his death, and interesting questions immediately arise in one's mind."

"And this sort of thing has been going on for some time?" asked Dr. Willard.

"Yes; and that leads me to a most significant fact," Maitland replied. "The date of the first threatening letter received by Mr. Moreton is sensibly coincident with the first of the false entries,—it varies but a few days. Of course it may be merely a coincidence, but it's worthy of notice."

"By the way, George, have you still those letters?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, I have everything entrusted to me by Mr. Moreton," replied Maitland. "You see I broke with him but

a few minutes before he died, so that I was unable to return any of the documents to him. I think now, I shall keep them, so long as I am likely to need them in the case. By the way, Doc, you are so fond of chess problems that I thought I'd bring you this. If you can solve it you'll be greater than Steinitz, Zukertort, Morphy, Neumann, Staunton, Blackburne, or any of the masters of chess about whom I used to read when a boy. I found it upon the floor at the meeting, and the figure in red catching my eye, I at once thought the assassin might have dropped it. I'll loan it to you long enough for you to copy it, but don't for the life of you let it out of your hands, as something tells me the thing is very important. I copied it for the officers yesterday, and this morning when I spoke of it to Dr. Carew, he asked for a copy, which I gave him, so this time I'll let you pick away at it yourself," and he passed the paper to his companion.

"Thanks," replied the doctor, pocketing the little slip. "Hold on a minute, George," he continued, as Maitland rose to depart. "I want to ask you why you didn't examine the rest of that old rookery over there in Jersey."

"I don't see why you should think that necessary," Maitland replied. "If Mr. Moreton had been murdered in some gambling-hell, or in some place to which the assassins might previously have had free access, one might be suspicious of everything. However, we searched that shanty inch by inch, simply because I couldn't believe that a corpse, weighing over 165 pounds, could possibly be taken from a room, unless there were some hole big enough for its passage; so when we all left 163 just after the murder, I went directly to police headquarters with Sheehan and Burke. As soon as they had reported we engaged a locksmith, took each a lan-

tern, and went back to the rookery. We stripped the linoleum from the floor and examined every board with minute care. We found nothing whatever in the least suspicious, and so spread the linoleum back in its place. We moved the wardrobe away from the wall as far as the railing would permit, and even took down the pictures, and removed the narrow ventilator castings; and then all three of us went over everything, lantern in hand. I examined every inch of that wall with the selfsame care I had bestowed upon the floor. Its flat, light tint made the search both easy and sure. It was as innocent of deception as a new-born babe. We went through the same moves with the ceiling, even, but with no better result. Well, to make a long story short, we went out into the hall, resealed the door as before, and with the assistance of the locksmith we ransacked every nook and corner of the rest of the building with the same thoroughness. I felt all but sure our search would be profitless, yet I did not permit that conviction to interfere with its thoroughness."

"And you found nothing out of the way?" asked the doctor.

"Not a thing which was not as far above suspicion as Cæsar's wife," Maitland replied. "I even climbed the electric light pole and examined the leads of the transformer. Then I remembered seeing a voltmeter and other testing instruments in Mr. Montrose's laboratory, and I got them and tested the line out from the transformer to the very lamps in the office,—which meant resealing the room for the third time, much to Burke's disgust."

"And what did you learn?"

"That's the most singular part of it, Ned," replied his companion. "Everything was just as straight as a string, except that the fuse was blown at the meter. I

put in a bit of copper wire, and everything lighted up as bright as ever. So that does away with the idea that the circuit was cut near the transformer. I tell you, Ned, this case beats anything I ever heard of. You feel sure you have discovered something one minute, and the next minute something else bobs up with which you can't possibly reconcile it. I know whose hands were on the murdered man's throat and I think I'm making great progress, when, all of a sudden, somebody else steals the corpse and knocks all my theories into a cocked hat. In this affair, all roads, instead of leading to Rome, seem to lead right straight up into the air. I think I'll go home and take a look into '*Isis Unveiled.*' I've always thought that unscientific enough to meet any conceivable occasion, and here's a good chance to try it. If it can make rhyme or reason out of the Moreton muddle, I'll get a *guru* and join the Eastern cult, astral body, *karma rupa* and all—if they'll let me sail into Nirvana in their boat, and not throw me overboard on account of my superabundant *tanha*," saying which he bade good-bye to his friend and made his way home.

CHAPTER V

When a great crime has been committed the suspicions of officialdom become like unto a dog with the rabies,—ready to snap at anything within its reach. In the great majority of cases this course is unproductive of any valuable results, yet there are now and then occasions when, to the surprise of everybody, including the official dogs themselves, the quarry is thus fanged in a way which, to sober thought, trenches upon the miraculous.

THE next day Elbert Reiss was arrested on suspicion of being implicated in the murder of James Eldredge Moreton. Reiss had waited upon the officers and volunteered to go over to Jersey City in order that extradition proceedings might be dispensed with.

Eric, in sore distress, went straight to Maitland, who had not heard of this new turn of affairs. The arrest had been made upon information of Officers Sheehan and Burke, and these two worthies, jealous of Maitland, had determined not to take him into their confidence. They did not wish him present at the examination, and he on his part had the very best of reasons for objecting to testify at this particular juncture. Elbert Reiss was his friend, and he had no desire to add a single straw's gloom to the shadow which enveloped him.

. . . . . .

At the examination of Reiss much "fishing" was indulged in; and, as usual, a great multitude of questions asked in the vain hope that they might elicit something of importance. It is not necessary to repeat this inconsequent testimony here. The more significant portions of the examination were as follows, all formalities being omitted:

Q. Were you acquainted with the murdered man?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Intimately?
A. No, sir.
Q. Were your relations pleasant?
A. No, sir.
Q. State in what way they were unpleasant.
A. We quarrelled on several occasions.
Q. Just what do you mean by "quarrelled"? Do you mean that you came to blows, or merely that you had an altercation?
A. We came to blows. On one occasion he attempted my life.
Q. How?
A. He assaulted me with a dagger.
Q. And you?
A. I disarmed him.
(The magistrate then held a vest up to Reiss's view.)
Q. Is that your vest?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Did you have it on when the murder was committed?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. What are these little red stains here upon the right side?
A. I do not know. I have never noticed any.
Q. Are they not blood-stains?
A. I could not say. I have never noticed them.
(The vest was then passed to him.)
Q. Examine them and tell me what you think.
A. I have nothing from which to form an opinion except their appearance; they look like blood-stains.
Q. Could they be paint stains gotten on during your work?

A. I think not, sir. I have never worn that vest while painting.

Q. Can you think of any way in which blood-stains might have gotten there?

A. No, sir.

Q. How near were you to Mr. Moreton when he was stabbed?

A. I could not say definitely. When the light went out I may have been some six feet or so from him.

Q. Have you cut yourself recently, say, in shaving, or otherwise?

A. Not to my knowledge. Certainly, not while wearing this vest, for I have not worn it except on that one occasion for months.

Q. You have testified that you had nothing whatever to do with this murder. Have you any suspicions,—any theory as to who the guilty party may be?

A. None whatever, further than that there must have been several concerned.

Q. Indeed! Why? why several?

A. The nature of the wounds was such that one could not have inflicted them, and there must have been an accomplice outside who cut off the lights.

Q. What was the cause of your quarrels with Mr. Moreton?

A. I would prefer not to answer that question.

Q. Are you aware that your refusal to do so will tell against you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you still refuse?

A. Yes, sir. I do not care to inflict upon another the unpleasant publicity I am obliged to endure.

Q. But, surely, the gravity of the charges preferred against you would warrant your disclosing anything which might help your case.

(The magistrate spoke very kindly.)

A. The charges have no terror for me. The truth will prevail in the end,—and, if not, it doesn't matter much!

(The bitterness of this last remark deeply impressed the magistrate.)

Q. Have you recently suffered any loss or affliction?

A. Yes, sir; a very great loss.

Q. Was the murdered man in any way connected with this loss?

A. Yes, sir; intimately.

Q. Was the loss of a pecuniary nature?

A. No, sir.

Q. What then was its nature?

A. I decline to state.

Q. For the reasons already given?

A. For the reasons already given.

(The magistrate then held up the blood-stained dagger.)

Q. Did you ever see that weapon before?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When?

A. On the afternoon of June 13th current.

Q. Where?

A. At No. 163 Lombrose Street.

Q. Did you ever see it previous to that time?

A. I cannot say.

Q. You painted a picture of Romeo and Juliet. In this, Romeo wears a dagger with a peculiar hilt. Was that imaginary, or did you have a weapon for a model?

A. I had a weapon for a model.

Q. Does this dagger suggest the one you used for a model?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Is it not the same dagger?

A. I do not know, sir.

Q. Did you not take a weapon like this to the stockholders' meeting?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did you take any weapon?

A. No, sir.

Q. Please examine this weapon closely, and see if you can say it is not the one you used as a model.

A. (Examining the dagger) I recognise nothing about it different from the one I painted.

Q. After your picture was finished what became of the dagger you used as a model?

A. It remained in my studio.

Q. Where is it now?

A. So far as I know, it is there now,—if this be not it.

Q. You say, "if this be not it." You think this is the same weapon, do you not?

A. It seems as if it must be, the pattern is so unusual.

Q. Did you ever know of any other weapon like this?

A. No, sir.

Q. And the one you painted. How did you come by it?

A. It was a present, sir.

Q. From whom?

A. I do not care to state.

Q. For the same reasons as before?

A. Yes, sir, if that be sufficient.

(The magistrate smiled and forebore, from motives of his own, to press this issue, even as he had forborne to press the others.)

Q. If the dagger you painted be still in your studio you could, I suppose, readily find it?

A. Yes, sir, I think so.

The other witnesses, with the exception of one, added

little or nothing to Reiss's own testimony, the straightforwardness of which most favourably impressed the magistrate. This particular witness referred to was Professor Emile Lorraine, who had been called to give expert testimony upon the blood-stains. He said that the stains were unquestionably blood-stains, but positively declined to definitely testify that the blood was human blood. He was sure, however, that the stains were not more than three or four days old when he examined them.

Apart from motive, opportunity, the blood-stains and the weapon, there was absolutely nothing against the artist brought out in any of the testimony. At first thought this would seem to have been quite sufficient to cause him to be held for the grand jury; but when due weight was given to the facts that motive is by no means conclusive of guilt; that Reiss was only one of many who had an equally good opportunity for the deed, and that the blood-stains found upon his clothes might easily be animal, everything seemed to hang upon the dagger.

This, at all events, is the view the magistrate took of the matter, and he, accordingly, directed that an officer should accompany Reiss to his studio, to see if he could find the dagger he had used in painting his picture.

CHAPTER VI

That stench in the nostrils of reason known as *legal precedent* defeats justice, on the one hand, while on the other it renders the lawyer's brain mushy, his morals punky, and afflicts the groaning land with a veritable locust-scourge of pettifoggers. In some such wise as this lay error, like disease, sets up its kingdom in us, and arrogates the right of self-defence. When we have given entertainment to a falsehood, we need not be surprised if our guest proceed to make himself very much at home, and absolutely refuse peacefully to depart the premises.

THE news of James Moreton's murder, as detailed in the press, coming to Miss Sherwood as it did on the very day of Reiss's terrible misunderstanding, was a second great shock to her. As soon as she had regained consciousness Lenore had told her all that had transpired after her lover had thrown her from him. The news of James Moreton's assassination had found her still in tears, despite every soothing influence which Lenore could summon to her aid.

When the news of Reiss's arrest reached her it seemed as if her cup of sorrow were indeed more than full. She read, with greedy interest, all that the papers contained concerning the case, and when she learned from them that it was expected the dagger,—her dagger!—would be the most convincing bit of evidence against him, it seemed as if her fortitude must break under the weight of this, its last straw.

This was Miss Sherwood's first experience with newspaper reports of murder cases, and she did not know that it was customary to try suspects in the newspapers before the more regularly ordained but sluggish engines of justice could be mobilised. For this reason things looked even blacker to her than they were.

She would have been glad to fly to her lover's rescue could she have seen any way to help him. She considered attempting to visit him in his confinement, but the thought of the reception she might expect at the hands of the man who believed her guilty of wantonly lacerating his tenderest emotions deterred her. When the day set for the examination arrived, however, she could not rest. It seemed as if her own soul were on the rack.

When she could endure it no longer, she rushed out upon the street and hastened to her lover's studio, to exchange her fears for Eric's dreads. She had seen Eric since the arrest, but she had not told him of that last quarrel between Moreton and Reiss which formed the ground-tone, the dominant pulse, of her fear; and she so longed to confide it to someone who loved her love, and would understand what it all meant to her. Confidence is a flower which buds in many climes, but opens fully in nothing but a congenial atmosphere. Such an atmosphere she knew she would find in Eric's love of Reiss. Then, too, she would take that other dagger,—so like unto Romeo's that few would ever spontaneously detect the difference: she would give it to Eric, and if the worst came to pass, what might it not do toward saving her lover? Never for a moment did she doubt his innocence, but she believed, from what she had read, that everyone else considered his guilt a foregone conclusion; for this was the first trial by newspaper she had ever attended. If the worst came she would beg her lover to produce this second weapon as Romeo's dagger,—*if the worst came!* Better a falsehood than an innocent life!

Thus it came to pass that while Elbert Reiss and the officer were at the studio, Marion Sherwood entered, fully expecting to find only Eric there.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Sherwood," said Reiss, with a

cold formality of action and of tone that cut her like a blade of ice.

"Good-afternoon," she responded, as the tears sprang to her eyes. "May—may I see you alone for a few moments? I—I have something I want to say, that—that I can't just say before another!" and she looked appealingly toward the officer.

"I'm afraid not, Miss Sherwood," replied Reiss, with a show of indifference which, do his best, he could not feel. "I have been permitted to come here in the custody of this gentleman to look for a dagger. Naturally, he will not care to let me out of his sight," and he turned away and renewed his search.

Marion, in mute dismay, the great tears coursing down her cheeks, held out her hands toward the officer in silent supplication.

She was very, very beautiful. He was very, very human.

"See here, sir," he said to Reiss as he pushed open the door to the inner room. "I guess the lady won't steal you, and if she does she can't get you out except by this door, unless she drops you into the street, so I guess I'll trust you. Mebbe it's a bit irregular, Miss," he said to the grateful Marion, "but I reckon we ain't exactly in 'Rooshia.'"

"You are very kind, sir!" she said, with a look that left her words far behind. "I'll not be long," and she entered the room followed by Reiss, who closed the door after him. He stood with his back against it, cold, gloomy, austere; and waited for her to begin the interview.

For a long time she paused unable to find the thin edge of the conversational wedge. At length she said:

"I cannot tell you how shocked I was to learn that anyone should seek to connect you with this crime."

"Miss Sherwood honours me beyond my humble deserts to bestow upon me any thought whatever," he said, with quiet irony.

"Oh, you do not understand!" she exclaimed, unable to restrain her feelings.

"*That line was mine!*" he said bitterly.

"What do you mean by that? Do you think I am acting a part?" she asked, with sudden intensity.

"A gentleman may not always say what he thinks to a lady," he said in low, measured tones.

"Oh, that is not fair! Please, please answer! Do you think I am saying what I do not feel—that I am playing a part?"

"It does not matter what I think. You act so well you would deceive those far more coldly critical than I could ever be."

"Then you *do* think so!" she replied quickly. "You think Mr. Moreton——"

"Stop! Let the dead rest!"

"Oh! will you not listen to me?"

"I have already listened to you to my everlasting sorrow. Is not that enough?"

"Oh, you do not understand!"

"My line again! We shall have to restudy our parts."

"But cannot you see? Look at me! am I not in earnest?"

"Doubtless,—dramatically!"

"Oh! why will you not let me explain?"

"Because there is nothing *to* explain. If it is that for which you wish to see me, I beg you will excuse me. Everything was explained to me most fully at our last interview. I shall remember it without a repetition, I assure you!"

"And you will not permit me to justify myself in your eyes?"

"No; let God be your judge, not me."

For some moments the woman's sobs choked her further utterance. The man waited silent and imperturbable. When she had regained command of her voice, she said in a low, spiritless tone:

"I know, of course, that you are innocent of the crime they would fasten upon you, but circumstances are against you. I learned from the cuts in the newspaper that the dagger used was indeed the one I gave you. For this reason you will not find it here:—your search will be fruitless. But see!" and she held up a dagger; "here is another weapon so closely resembling your own that the authorities will never discover the difference. I beseech you, take this back to them as your dagger!" and she held the weapon toward him.

For a moment a shade of perplexity crossed the man's face. Then he said:

"I am quite at a loss to understand this singular interest in my behalf. The weapon would undoubtedly pass for the one you gave me, and set me free. I thank you for your interest, but I must decline to accept of the help you offer. I have no right to ask anything of you, and I shall make no false statements."

"Not even to attain the ends of justice?" she said imploringly.

"No; not even to save my life! The reward would not repay the sacrifice. If you will excuse me, I will return to my custodian," and he opened the door and bowed himself formally out of the room.

The woman sank into a chair and wept till long after the officer and his charge had left. It was Eric Montrose who finally aroused her.

. . . . .

The next morning Reiss's examination was resumed.

The magistrate again questioned Officer Sheehan in part as follows:

Q. The matter of the ownership of this dagger is of vital importance. You have expressed yourself as certain that this weapon belongs to Mr. Reiss. Upon what do you base that assurance?

A. Upon the minute accuracy with which it is represented in the picture of Romeo and Juliet.

Q. Is there anything else that leads you to that conviction?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What?

A. The prisoner's admission that he had a weapon indistinguishable from this, coupled with the singular uniqueness of the thing.

Q. How do you know the weapon is unique? Have you made any attempt to find others like it?

A. Yes, sir; we have made diligent search.

Q. And found nothing at all resembling this weapon?

A. Nothing accessible to the prisoner.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. The police department in Washington notified us that they had a similar weapon. We went there and compared the two. They were absolutely identical in appearance, so far as we could see. Nowhere else, however, could we find a weapon in the least like this one.

Q. Why didn't you tell me all this before?

(The magistrate spoke with unmistakable sternness.)

A. We did not think it pertinent to the case, since this Washington weapon was so clearly inaccessible to the assassin, having been in the police archives there for more than a quarter of a century.

Q. What! How came it there?

A. It was the weapon which killed the senior James Eldredge Moreton more than twenty-five years ago.

Q. And I have to drag all this out of you with a corkscrew! You have given your testimony with a view to maintaining your own convictions, rather than of arriving at the truth. Do you know any other similarities between these two strange crimes?

A. They were both committed on the 13th of June, your Honour.

(Sheehan said this somewhat sheepishly.)

Q. And you were going to keep all this to yourself! (The magistrate spoke very sharply.) Did you not know that a similar crime occurring twenty-five years ago, upon the same day of the year, in the same family, and committed with a weapon indistinguishable from this one, was evidence of the utmost importance?

A. We—it was—I—I did not so regard it.

Q. Indeed! Maybe you regarded these two murders occurring a quarter of a century apart as a mere coincidence.

The magistrate made no attempt to conceal his displeasure. At this juncture a man entered the room and whispered something to him, and he said:

"Let her come in."

A moment later Marion Sherwood entered.

Elbert Reiss started at sight of her, and then arose quickly as if about to protest. Officer Burke laid his hand upon the artist's arm and he forbore to speak.

"If you please, sir," Marion said, addressing the magistrate, "I would like to tell what I know about Mr. Reiss's dagger."

The magistrate looked at the beautiful young woman with almost fatherly tenderness and said:

"We will listen to whatever you have to say, but first tell me am I not addressing Miss Marion Sherwood, the actress?"

"Yes, sir;" she said, blushing.

"You may proceed with any communication you desire to make," and the magistrate leaned back in his chair prepared to listen.

"There is but little I have to say," she began, slowly. "The picture of Romeo and Juliet was painted for my manager, Mr. Wilkes. I posed for the Juliet and my leading man was the model for the Romeo. The dagger he wore I furnished. After the picture was finished I gave the weapon to the artist as a keepsake. The papers have had so much to say about this being the only weapon of its kind in existence that I feared a grave injustice might be done an innocent man unless you knew that there was at least one other very, very like it."

She paused a moment to see if she were to receive any encouragement.

"We have just learned of that other weapon," replied the magistrate. "It was not accessible to the assassin, still it proves a plurality of such weapons, and that is a very material point. You refer, of course, to the one in Washington?"

"No, sir," Marion replied. "I refer to the one here," and she laid a dagger upon the table before the astonished magistrate. He seized it and examined it minutely. Officers Sheehan and Burke were both dumfounded and crestfallen at this turn of affairs. Elbert Reiss seemed the least affected of them all. He viewed the whole affair with stoical, Germanesque indifference. When the magistrate looked up a marked change had come over his countenance.

"Mr. Reiss," he said, addressing the artist, "you have refused to answer certain questions. You declined to state who gave you your dagger. This, Miss Sherwood has answered. You also spoke of a great loss, the nature of which you declined to state, and of quar-

relling with Mr. Moreton over something you refused to specify. Let me ask you now if this lady were not in some way,—never mind what,—connected with all of these refusals."

"Yes, sir," said Reiss, without exhibiting the slightest interest.

"I thought so!" said the magistrate half aloud. Then he turned to Officers Sheehan and Burke and said:

"This third weapon decides me. The daggers, you see, are, so to speak, quite common. I find the evidence entirely insufficient to warrant me in holding this gentleman for the grand jury. Mr. Reiss, you are discharged!"

CHAPTER VII

The material of life's cord is savagery; civilisation is but the manner of its twisting. From the coarse, loosely-wound, double fibre, with scarcely more integrity than a rope of sand, to the lariat woven of infinity expressed in spider-filaments, and capable of throwing its comprehending noose about the remotest star, is indeed a far cry; yet the ineffable difference lies hidden in a mere handful of thinking matter. Standing upon the shore of a fathomless psychic sea whose phenomena roll in upon us wave after wave in long perspective, where is the Canute among us who dare utter the defiant dogma: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther"?

LEFT to himself, a man is prone to acquire the orbital habit,—a sort of merry-go-round in grey matter,—as profitless, so far as new pastures are concerned, as that similar feline *folie circulaire* (if the alienist will loan us the phrase),—a cat's pursuit of its own tail. Every true friend and companion, however, becomes as it were, a new gravitational centre, out of which flow tangential influences permuting our egocentricity into myriad altrocentric forms, virgin, fascinating and profitable.

Maitland placed a high value upon his relations with his friend, Dr. Willard, not only from the standpoint of sentiment, but also from that of intellectual profit.

Calling upon him one afternoon,—it was upon the day Elbert Reiss was discharged,—Maitland's greeting was as follows:

"Ned, I'm as full of gossip as a sewing-circle, and as tired of work as a tramp. Did your brain ever strike for eight hours, and then demand overtime for thinking? That's about the condition in my thought-works, and the pity of it is I can't retaliate because I can't find anything to lock out."

"What have you there?" the doctor asked, as Maitland drew a paper from his pocket; "another one of

those crazy-quilt, typewriter rebuses? If so, put it back, if you want me to remain clothed and in my right mind. Ever since you gave me that other thing,—that cryptogram, if that's what it is,—I've had visions of such groups of letters as would make even a Russian sneeze his head off. I've eaten from a keyboard; slept between parentheses; drank a whole lower case of alphabetical intoxicants over a space bar, and, as might be expected, dreamt exclamation points, and arisen with my intellectual upper case so horribly pied that the good wife has forbade my matutinal ninety degrees of apple 'tart,' as John Bull would call it. Wherefore, I conjure you, by——"

"—Hold on, Doc! I can prove an alibi," interjected Maitland. "This thing I have in my hand is no cryptogram, but is as straight English as you talk; yes, straighter, you matutinal pie-eater, you! Listen to it.

"Nelson, New Zealand, May 1, 19—.

"DEAR BROTHER: I have just learned that a terrible danger menaces you, and I hasten to acquaint you with it, in order that you may be on your guard. I must not now take time to go into any particulars, or to offer you any explanation. Suffice it to say that a plot of some years' standing has been confided to me by one who felt that he owed me a great debt of gratitude.

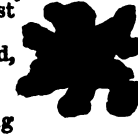
"Something like half a century ago father was here in New Zealand, and acquired,—never mind how,—the deadly enmity of the Mohakakas, a tribe of Maoris. As a result, they swore not only to kill him, but to stamp out the name of Moreton so far as our branch of the family is concerned,—or rather to prevent its extension. After killing father, they were to watch any male children he might leave, not molesting them unless they should marry, in which case, they, too, were to be summarily disposed of. It was upon the thirteenth day of June that our father encountered the deadly enmity of these Maoris, which accounts for his assassination on that selfsame day of the year. You remember the figure upon the dagger which killed father,—it was shaped like this: That is some sort of a badge of fellowship among those who are leagued against us, and is the result of some mystical rite or incantation. I warn you to shun it as you would the Evil One; for wherever you see it, it spells death to

you! Beware, also, of the thirteenth day of June, for these Maoris believe that no vengeance will be quite complete unless it fall upon the anniversary of the original offence. Cæsar had his ides of March, you have your thirteenth of June. Do not make the mistake of thinking your assailants will be ignorant, heavily tattooed savages,—far from it!—They will be cultured gentlemen speaking English with fluent ease, and you will only know they are not Americans by their dark skin and delicate facial traceries.

"Some of the most eloquent and able members of the New Zealand Parliament are full-blooded Maoris, so you must not make the mistake of despising your enemies. Be ever on your guard, James; and remember our father's fate! One thing more. The most dangerous and active spirit of this vendetta left here, so my informant told me, under the assumed name of John White. The name is very common one, but you will recognise this man easily. He is very dark, something over sixty years of age, and of herculean frame. He left here immediately after your marriage with Hortense.

"And now once more let me caution you to use the utmost care in all things, and at all times, but most particularly in regard to three points, to wit:

"(1) Anybody or anything associated, even in the remotest way, with this figure:



"(2) The thirteenth of June.

"(3) A large, dark man calling himself 'John White.'

"Say nothing of all this to Mother or Lucia; it would only worry them. I shall write more fully a little later.

"And now good-bye, and God guard you! Write often. I shall tremble till I know you are safely past June thirteenth.

"With much love, I remain

"Your affectionate brother,

"ADRIAN.

"P. S. Nothing new at the mines.—*Do be careful, James!*"

"Now what do you say to that, Ned?" asked Maitland, as he finished reading.

The doctor did not reply for a moment, then he said: "I say you had better ask John White that question."

"It does look a bit black for White,—if you can imagine such a thing,—doesn't it? Oh, we're getting on!" and Maitland looked as if a ray of light had at last pierced the darkness. "You see, this letter was written more than a year ago, and I suppose the fact that Moreton safely passed one June thirteenth after

receiving its warning lulled him into a false sense of security. Observe how nicely all this corroborates the discovery Adrian has made. Oh, White's a very interesting personage just now!"

"Shall you ask for his arrest?" queried the doctor.

"How can I?" said Maitland, spreading out his hands helplessly. "How can I ask for the arrest of a man on the ground that he actually committed a crime when I am not able even to tell how he *might* have done it, to say nothing of how he actually *did* do it? That would be worthy of Sheehan and Burke. However, I find Mr. White just now a personage of engrossing interest, and shall cultivate his acquaintance sedulously. I have his address, and I know he is there,—at least he was when I verified all the addresses, a day or two ago."

"By the way, speaking of Sheehan and Burke, have they seen this letter?" the doctor asked.

"Oh! yes," replied his companion. "I found it among the debris 'Charlie Bert' gathered from the floor after the robbery, and filed away for me."

"And what did Sheehan and Burke say to it?" questioned Dr. Willard.

"They didn't say much," George rejoined, "but, they looked unutterable wisdom at each other, and I wouldn't be surprised if there were a warrant out for White inside of twenty-four hours. But that isn't all I've got to show you, Doc. I've a strange letter from a lady—I mean a letter from a strange lady.—Egad! I think they're both a bit strange! Listen:

"'DEAR SIR: I have a communication from the Unseen of great importance to you. You are in a quandary, and your Guardian Spirit would assist you. Something has mysteriously disappeared,—the Spirit and I can help you to find it. Private sitting by appointment only. "'Yours in the Light,

"'MADAME DUVAL.

"'Mr. George Maitland.'"

"Humph! Madame Duval, the spiritualistic medium! I thought they'd driven her out of business long ago," said the doctor. "I've heard it said she sometimes hits things pretty pat, though. By the way, George," he continued, "did you find that other letter promised by Moreton's brother?"

"Yes," Maitland replied; "it merely confirmed and emphasised what he previously had written, and related how he had come to learn it. I'll tell you all about it when I have more time. I've an appointment with Madame Duval in half an hour, and I want you to come with me."

"Nothing would suit me better. There'll be no cappers in this, I suppose. It's private, isn't it?"

"Strictly," Maitland replied; "and I'll warrant you in advance that I'm not on the books of any medium in the world; so the Madame will have to rely upon herself to ascertain my spiritual guide,—you needn't smile at the idea of my having celestial direction; it's very far from being ridiculous,—the names of my 'tall lady in black'; 'old gentleman with blue eyes and grey hair'; and 'little girl with long hair and a short dress'; for this will be my first appearance at any spiritualistic seance, public or private.—Come on!"

CHAPTER VIII

The unknown is the night which follows every day, and all paths lead into it. In its unfathomable darkness every quest loses itself at last. Its language is silence, and its voice the mute music of eternity.

MADAME DUVAL'S apartments were neatly and tastefully furnished. Everything bore evidence of culture and refinement, with the single exception of a very poorly executed portrait of herself as a "seventh daughter" surrounded by what the artist had intended for spiritual communicants.

The entrance of the Madame showed the visitors a large, fine-looking woman with light blue eyes, an abundance of brown hair, and a tendency to adiposity. There was a certain something about her manner which would have attracted attention almost anywhere. She might have been fifty or even fifty-five years of age.

"You are Mr. Maitland, are you not?" she said, turning to George. "And the other gentleman," she continued, closing her eyes, "is your friend—Will—Willard, Dr. Willard, I should say,—yes, Dr. Edward Willard.—It is Mr. Maitland who wishes Madame Duval's help. Please take this chair by the table, my dear."

The Madame called everyone "my dear," irrespective quite of age, condition or sex.

"There now," she went on; "I shall see what the dear friends on the other side have for you. There is something of importance, I am sure, for they have so beset me, so urged me to send for you, that I have been utterly

unable to do anything for anyone else, so you see, my dear, I wrote you, as it were, in self-defence; you were quite ruining my business.—There, I feel the influence, and I shall write for you," saying which the Madame seized paper and pencil and closed her eyes.

After a few moments her pencil began to make erratic and formless scrawls upon the paper. These quickly changed to an open, jagged, all but totally illegible hand, written with nervous, jerky movements, which Maitland, unable to see the penciled record, tried in vain to translate.

It was some minutes after the writing ceased before the Madame spoke. Her effort seemed completely to have exhausted her, and she remained for quite a while with closed eyes. When at length she opened them, she gazed absently about the room as if trying, as it were, to "get her bearings"; then her glance fell upon Maitland and she said:

"Ah, yes; it was for you, my dear! Now I remember," and she held the paper toward him. He reached out to take it, but, as if a second thought had struck her, she withdrew and folded it.

"My fee for private sittings like this is five dollars, my dear," and she again held out her hand, but this time without the paper.

Maitland paid her the money without comment, and she handed him the paper, saying:

"It's not very legible, my dear, but you'll be able to pick it out with a little study. It's a great relief to me to be rid of the communication, whatever it may be," and she sighed as if she had just put down a heavy burden.

"Then you do not know what you write?" Maitland said to her.

"No, my dear; I never have the remotest idea of what

they give me when I'm in a trance. If the message is for me, I do not get it till it is all over and I read what I have written."

. . . . .

The two men, after glancing at the paper and satisfying themselves that it was a thing to be translated rather than read, suppressed their curiosity until they reached Dr. Willard's home, when they spread the document out between them and somewhat laboriously picked out the following:

"My spirit feels the torment of my body, which is rapidly being consumed. I cannot rest. They have buried me in a white hell whose invisible flames have already licked the flesh from my bones. Take pity on my wicked soul! I may not tell my murderers' names, because they meted out to me no more than I deserved. You wonder where they have hidden my body. Follow my directions and you shall find all that is left of it. Go to 163 Lombrose Street. Measure off upon the ground, in the exact plane of the western wall of the building, one hundred sixty feet in a northerly direction. Connect the outermost end of this line with the northeastern corner of the building. Starting at this corner lay off thirteen feet along this connecting line, and mark the spot, for there lies buried all that is left of my body! If you have pity for the wicked, oh, make haste to disinter it!"

"Why should a man's spirit be restless just because something is happening to his body?" asked the doctor incredulously. "Ow! Ow! Stop it!" he continued, dancing about as his companion made two or three little jabs at him with a pin. "Why are you sticking that into me?"

"I wanted to see if your spirit would be restless just because something was happening to your body," Maitland replied, with an assumed scientific interest.

"You're a vil—scientist!" retorted his companion, with a grimace.

"Um! maybe so; but you haven't told me yet what you think of the Madame," replied his companion.

"I'll wait, if you don't mind, till I see what you unearth over there in Jersey," discreetly answered the doctor.

"You won't have to wait long if you accompany me, for I shall be on the ground fully equipped and ready to excavate as soon as dark," said Maitland.

"And I shall be with you, George," replied the doctor.

"Ned," said Maitland gravely, as he laid a hand upon his friend's shoulder; "you've been a mighty good friend to me, and I appreciate it more than I can easily tell you; but I must not let you forget that, in keeping so close to me, you are incurring a grave danger. Be warned in time. These are neither boys nor amateurs with whom we are playing. The fellows who cracked that safe are right up to date scientifically; and in pretty much everything else they have done they appear to be a long way ahead of the game. We must not underestimate the gravity of their threat. Is it not wise, therefore, that you forego this little expedition?"

"And let you go alone? I rather guess not!" exclaimed his companion.

"If you persist in incurring this danger for my sake, Ned, go armed. I deeply appreciate your kind solicitude, and—and I'll call for you on my way over to Jersey," saying which he hastily left his companion, in order not to betray all the emotion he felt.

CHAPTER IX

The grave should forever shut its lips upon the last word of life's message. To force a repetition of even a single syllable—to pry, as it were, the clinched jaws open, and seek to quicken the coldly ignorant tongue into any sort of confession whatsoever, is an act which creates within us an inexpressible abysmal horror for which the imagination can find no words.

JUST back of the northeast corner of 163 Lombrose Street, Jersey City, are two men busily digging in the earth. It is ten o'clock at night, and they work diligently and quietly in the heavy shadow of the building. Both men have dark-lanterns, but they use them sparingly, and in a way to attract no attention. Suddenly one of the men stops digging, stoops down, and picks up something from the ground.

"It's quicklime, Ned, as I'm a living sinner! 'I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound'! We must dig carefully now, and have a light all the time. Here; you manage the lanterns and let me do the digging," and he passes his lantern to his companion.

"Hold on, George, there's a bone! Let me see it! It's a human bone and has been recently clothed with flesh. The Madame is a wonder!"

"Queen Elizabeth was a Tudor," replies the man with the spade, all but the more volatile part of his mind thoroughly absorbed by his work.

"I think we had best go no farther without notifying the authorities that we have found the body of the murdered man. They will probably want to see it as it is exhumed," says Dr. Willard, the man with the lanterns.

"I suppose what you say is good advice," says Maitland, "though I hate to have Sheehan's and Burke's noses in this affair.—By Jove! now that I think of it, I don't believe they'll get their noses near enough this stench to bother us much. I guess we'll give the regulars a show. It'll be worth all the trouble it causes to see my rivals' faces when they learn that to the efforts of their despised Bostonian is due the real *corpus delicti* of the case. You see now, Doc, why our bloodhound acted so strangely; and I trust you also perceive that we have to deal with criminals who possess such a degree of devilish cunning that even the presence of the gravest dangers does not cause them to lose a single trick in their wonderful game. Despite the fact that every moment they remained in this locality with their gruesome burden of death materially increased their chances of detection, they were yet cool enough to carry the corpse some distance beyond, sprinkle turpentine about as if to conceal the path of their escape, leave the bottle plainly in evidence, and then double back upon their own trail and bury the body here. The scheme fooled us beautifully, and led us to look for the grave in perfectly innocent ground. Take my word for it, Doc, in the matter of cleverness these scoundrels are the limit!—But suppose you go notify the authorities, Ned, while I scratch around here a bit. It's not far; you know where you went before?"

"Indeed I do; I don't think I shall ever forget anything that occurred on that memorable afternoon of June thirteenth," saying which, Dr Willard puts down his lanterns and hurries away.

. . . . .

"So you've found him, have you?" are the first words of Officer Sheehan, as he arrives at the place where the men have been digging. "I s'pose it's a good idea to

know where the body is; though, for the life o' me, I don't see how it's going to be the slightest help in jugging the assassins, unless they were fools enough to leave some clew here,—which is about as likely as a July snow-storm. Let me see what it looks like," and he gazes into the hole only to stagger back the next instant. "Phew! How the devil can you stand that stench?"

"I've been eating Limburger, so I don't notice it," replies Maitland, laughing. "Shall I dig, or do you want to come down in here yourselves?" and he lays his spade upon the edge of the hole, as if about to spring out of it.

"It's your find, and I reckon you're entitled to all there is in it," replies Sheehan quickly. "I dare say Burke, being of a meddlesome disposition, will want to do a bit of the digging, eh, Terry?"

"If I do any diggin' here, it'll be 'diggin' out,' I can tell you that! Phew! It smells to heaven! Go on, Mr. Maitland. As my pot-bellied friend has remarked, to the victor belongs the spoils, and if this thing ain't a spoil, it will be if you keep it a bit longer,—unless my 'smeller' deceives me," saying which Officer Burke steps back a few paces and awaits results. As each thing of interest is unearthed both he and Officer Sheehan come forward and examine it.

"Look at this!" says Maitland, holding up a gold watch and fob chain, the former bearing the monogram "J. E. M." "Here's Mr. Moreton's watch, worth two hundred, if it is a cent. The assassins might have had that for the taking, yet they left it. How does that fit into the theory that robbery was the motive? And see here! here are both his rings upon the bones of the left hand. Those stones never cost less than a thousand dollars. If robbery had been the motive, wouldn't the

murderers have made sure of these, even if they had been obliged to take the fingers with them?"

Sheehan and Burke exchange "knowing" glances and then the latter replies flippantly:

"Have ye ever heard of the mummy that was pressed for time?" and he winks his introverted left eye in the darkness, from sheer force of habit.

"Yes, but that was in another *case*," replies Maitland, good-humouredly. "See, here is his key-chain," he continues, holding up that article. "These are just bones. See here, Ned," he says to Dr. Willard, "there's the backbone, fairly well intact,—but look, man, the skull is missing!"

"Probably you'll find it lower down, George," replies the doctor.

"I doubt it, Ned," Maitland answers. "At any rate, if they could stop to cut the head off they might have found time to remove a watch from a fob-pocket, if robbery were their motive. Even a mummy would have known enough for that, eh, Mr. Burke?"

"Mebbe so, but they do say mummies is forgetful," retorts that gentleman sententiously.

"Here's his pen-knife, and—hold on!" Maitland exclaims, stooping down into the hole, "this thing all wadded up here must be the coat. If so, it's clear they didn't stop to put it on the corpse again."

"Mebbe these mummies was pressed for time, after all, eh?" says Burke triumphantly.

"But, my dear fellow," Maitland retorts, "you forget that when mummies are pressed for time they are more than ever careful about their wraps."

In a few moments Maitland brings to light the remains of a pocket-book containing fifty-three dollars in bills, and, a little later, Mr. Moreton's beautiful diamond stud. There are portions of the grave which are rela-

tively free from the lime, and it is in one of these that the coat and wallet are found.

The digging continues for a considerable time in silence, broken only by the sound of the spade, the thud of the gravel as it is thrown out of the hole, and the click of the bones as each new accession is placed upon the little pile at Maitland's right. It is a weird and gruesome spectacle.

"I'm down to hard-pan, gentlemen," says Maitland at length, "and there's no skull here. The head has been removed! What do you make of that?" he continues, addressing both Sheehan and Burke at once.

"What do you think of it?" discreetly replies Sheehan.

"I think the assassins had a use for that head," says Maitland quietly.

"A use for a dead man's head!" ejaculates Sheehan.

"Who's any use for a dead-head!" interjects Burke.

"Quit your unseemly levity," says Sheehan to his companion, and then, turning to Maitland, he continues, "What possible use could the assassins have for a dead man's head?"

"When there are so many live heads, like my friend's here, that are no good, neither!" interposes Burke.

Maitland throws a sidelong glance at Willard and replies: "You have asked for a 'possible use.' Have you ever read of the head-hunting Dyaks of Borneo? They believe that every person whose head they secure in this world will be their slave in the next. Their standing, even in life, is determined by the number of heads they have secured, and no self-respecting Dyak maiden would ever think of marrying a youth who could not boast at least one head beside his own."

"—That's all very interesting, as they say, from an academic standpoint," retorts Sheehan, "but, if I

haven't forgotten my map, Borneo is a good bit off my beat."

"Never ye mind that, Sheehan, ye've been off it before many a time!" laughs Burke.

"You asked for a 'possible use' for such a head," says Maitland, with apparent solemnity. "I named you one. Don't you think any Dyak would be proud of such a personage as Mr. James Moreton for his slave throughout eternity?—But it's getting late, and these bones ought to be cleansed and cared for before the lime finishes them, too. Do you know how to attend to them, or shall I have the whole business taken to my laboratory where everything can be seen to properly?"

"You'd better take them," replies Sheehan, with alacrity, for the proposition removes a great weight from his mind. "You're a specialist on such things, and you're on the case, which makes it all regular, eh, Terry?"

"Sure!" laconically replies that functionary, adding in an aside to Sheehan, spoken from behind his hand, "We wouldn't either of us know what to do with so much as the wish-bone!"

. . . . . .

The Herald next morning contained the following display of scare headlines:

"A GRUESOME FIND!

"ASTONISHING DEVELOPMENT IN THE MORETON MYSTERY. MR. GEORGE MAITLAND, THE BOSTON DETECTIVE, FINDS THE HEADLESS REMAINS OF THE MURDERED MAN BURIED IN QUICKLIME IN THE REAR OF THE VERY BUILDING IN WHICH THE MURDER WAS COMMITTED!

"THE VICTIM'S WATCH AND CHAIN, TWO VALUABLE RINGS, A DIAMOND STUD, PEN-KNIFE, AND FIFTY-THREE DOLLARS IN MONEY ALSO UNEARTHED.

"AUTHORITIES NOW CONVINCED THAT ROBBERY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE MOTIVE FOR THE MURDER."

It was nearly noon when Dr. Willard joined Maitland at his laboratory. They had worked over the remains until far past midnight, and the doctor had felt the need of lying abed much later than was his custom. Maitland, however, had arisen betimes, and had made an important call and done much work while his friend still slept.

"Well, you've done a deal of work, George, since I left you," said the doctor, glancing around as he entered the laboratory. "How is everything? All right?"

"Yes, but I don't know how long it will stay so," replied Maitland. "Something's brewing; I feel it in my bones. By the way, let me show you what I found clinging to one of the other bones," and with a pair of tweezers he laid a hair upon a little slip of paper. "No! No! Don't touch it!" he exclaimed as the doctor was about to pick it up. "Look all you want to, but don't handle. Here! look through this," and he placed the object under his microscope.

"As I live, it's a hair from the missing head!" exclaimed the doctor; "and—and there's blood upon the lower end of it where it seems to have been broken or cut off."

"Well, which?" asked Maitland.

"Cut, I should say, but with a dull instrument," his companion replied.

"Good for you!" and Maitland patted him approvingly upon the shoulder. "It's rather a small lock of hair for a keepsake, but we'll just hang on to it with the utmost care, for all that. I have everything neatly cleaned, classified, marked, and put away for future reference, besides which I've made a most important call."

"Indeed?" said the doctor.

"Yes; so I regard it. Let me explain a bit," said

Maitland, seating himself upon the edge of a table. "James Moreton's head was severed from his body and taken away by someone. Now, apart from Adrian Moreton's letters to his brother, I know of nothing, except the finger-marks on the victim's throat, which so directly casts suspicion upon anyone as this does upon John White, about whom, by the way, I have recently learned quite a little. He is a member of Miss Sherwood's company, and I found his fellow-actors quite communicative."

"For heaven's sake, George, what do you mean? I don't see the slightest connection between the missing head and John White's guilt!" exclaimed the doctor in amazement.

"Listen! I've only a minute or two before I must be out of this, so I'll be brief," said Maitland hurriedly. "You are probably not aware that John White is a Maori, but he is. Now, it is an old Maori custom to cut off and preserve, by baking, the heads of their enemies. There's scarcely a first-class museum in the world that hasn't at least one genuine New Zealand head. The British Museum has them galore. Since civilisation corrupted the Maori with the love of gold, there has been quite a thriving traffic carried on in this gruesome commodity, slaves being occasionally tattooed and beheaded, and their heads sold for a good price. Now, I take it, John White would want James Moreton's head to bake for two reasons: First, because the indignity to the corpse would make his revenge more complete; and second, in order that he might have something to take home as voucher that he had really discharged the commission laid upon him."

"That seems to me good reasoning, George," said the doctor in a voice which betrayed keen excitement.

"Now, I visited White at his lodgings this morning

upon rather a flimsy pretext," continued Maitland. "However, it worked, and that's the main point. The servant evidently took me for an intimate friend, and sent me right up to his room. When I knocked, I suppose White mistook me for the servant, for he shouted 'Come'! and I entered. He stood before his bureau shaving, with his undershirt open at the throat. When he saw my reflection in the glass, he buttoned his shirt quickly, but not quickly enough to prevent my seeing a little red figure upon the upper part of his chest. Ned, it was the selfsame heiroglyph we have encountered so often!—He did not know I had seen it, and talked without the least apparent restraint, shaving all the while; for I had begged him to finish, as I wanted all the time I could get to look about. Well, I noticed when he put his shaving-kit away that he did not put it in the bureau drawer, but took it to his trunk, close by where I sat. You know how keen my scent is? Well, sir, the moment he opened that trunk and took out a little, greasy cigar-box, in order to place his shaving-kit under it, I smelled again not only the odour I had noticed in the shanty to which Moreton and I tracked our assailant, but also the entirely distinct odour I had detected on the burly ruffian's person. There was no mistaking either of them. They were the selfsame odours, and they came from John White's trunk! Now you see why I'm in a hurry. I am convinced by his acts, and the look of his room, that Mr. White is about to shift his ground. He has, of course, read by this time that Mr. Moreton's remains have been discovered,—with the exception of the head, and, if we do not misjudge him, he will naturally desire to escape with his horrible trophy while opportunity is allowed him. I should have told you that Sheehan and Burke expect by noon to have a warrant out for his arrest. If they

don't move quickly they won't find him," and Maitland glanced hastily at his watch and then added,—"and neither will I. Good-bye, Ned! I hate to rush off in this unceremonious fashion, but it will never do for me to lose my head, you know,—and I've a strong conviction it's in John White's trunk. Good-bye, again! I'll see you later," and without more ado he rushed from the laboratory.

. . . . .

Late that night Dr. Willard received the following telegram:

"Lost my head. Am on its track. Must have it. Shall follow to end earth if necessary. Don't worry. "GEORGE."

EPISODE FIFTH

The Feast of the Long White Pig

CHAPTER I

The human personal equation, being expressed in indeterminate quantities, we are ever prone to assign to it any values which may happen to exhibit equality, quite oblivious of the fact that the chances are as ten to one that our values are fictitious on the one hand, and the further fact, on the other hand, that in the realm of psychology not *quantity* but *quality* is the determining factor of all equations.

DR. HENRY FORSYTHE CAREW sat, pen in hand, at his office desk with a newly written letter spread before him. He read it through carefully, paused a moment, and then added his signature with a rapid flourish. It is an unpleasant task to chronicle for the afflicted the grim triumphs of death, and the cloud upon the physician's fine face told only too plainly how little he relished the business before him.

The letter ran as follows:

"New York, June 27, 19—.

"MR. ADRIAN CANOVA MORETON,
"Nelson, New Zealand.

"DEAR MR. MORETON: In the absence of your mother and sister abroad, a most painful duty has fallen upon me. It is with the sincerest sympathy that I transmit to you tidings which I know will fill you with the deepest sorrow.

"On the thirteenth instant your brother James passed away under circumstances peculiarly tragic,—in short, he met death as the victim of unknown assassins while presiding at a meeting of The International Wireless Telephone Company.

"It will doubtless be a source of great comfort to you to know that his death was instantaneous, and that it must, therefore, have been all but totally painless. All was over before he had time to suffer. I was present at the time and removed from the wound the dagger which killed him. It bore upon its blade the mysterious figure which you mentioned, a year or more ago, in your letters to your brother; and this, in connection with your warning, seems

to me to indicate in what direction justice should look, though all the authorities do not share my views.

"We have not been able, after several days spent in search, to find the address of your mother and sister, though it is doubtless somewhere among your brother's papers, and this must explain why, at this late day, the duty devolves upon me of sending you this sad information.

"Your brother's will names you as his executor, and I sincerely hope you may be able to come here without unnecessary delay, as I am told his affairs sorely need your immediate attention.

"Pardon me for mentioning, at such a time as this, a somewhat delicate matter with which possibly you may not be acquainted. It is necessary you should know it, in order that you may the more fully realise the urgent need of your presence.

"Your brother instituted divorce proceedings against his wife shortly before his death, and the trial was almost at hand when he was murdered. You will see, therefore, that in these trying circumstances you cannot look to his wife for quite the same assistance you would expect under ordinary conditions. The more need, therefore, of your presence on the ground.

"We shall, of course, send the sad tidings to your mother and sister, as soon as we can ascertain their address. Might I suggest that you notify them if you know their whereabouts, since we may not be able to communicate with them for an indefinite period?

"I reserve all the particulars of your sad bereavement against your arrival.—You will be better able then to consider the matter without undue suffering.

"Trusting that you can join me in the belief that all is for the best, I remain, with profound sympathy,

"Very sincerely yours,

"HENRY FORSYTHE CAREW."

Henry Forsythe Carew was a man of rare parts. He possessed a mind of more than ordinary brilliancy, and a heart that was tender to a fault. His failings,—for the best of us are not absolutely perfect,—leaned to virtue's side and were, more often than not, the result of over-sensitiveness. He could not bear to inflict pain upon anyone, which led him on more than one occasion to say and do agreeable things when harsh ones would have had a far more salutary effect. This tendency grew out of, and at the same time reflexly augmented, a slight defect of will. He might have written the letter

before him a full week sooner, but he had put off the disagreeable task from day to day, with the fatal tendency common to so many of us, to keep our bugbears before us, where we must constantly see them, instead of behind us, where we may readily forget them. In this way he often kept his sensitive soul, for long periods, in a state of constant horripilation. At length, however, the thing was done and lay before him ready for the mail.

The disagreeable task was accomplished, and Dr. Carew closed the incident with a sigh of relief, as he placed the letter in his inside breast pocket and left the room.

. . . . .

It was some weeks after the mailing of Dr. Carew's letter before Dr. Willard received any further word from Maitland. On one hot summer morning, however, the long-looked-for word at last came. It ran as follows:

"My Dear Doc: I haven't found my head yet, so you needn't marvel if this is neither coherent nor brilliant. Arrived in San Francisco 'just soon enough to be too late,' as the Irishman said, and so took the first steamer for New Zealand. We are staying over for a day, at Honolulu, and I am utilising part of the time to indite this scrawl.

"If you ever go to California, Doc, take the northern route. The mountain scenery is inexpressibly grand.

"But I must tell you the news! I am disguising myself as an Englishman, long resident in New Zealand;—in short, Doc, I'm going to be a pakeha Maori. I keep in the sun as much as possible, and am really getting quite brown, and it isn't all due to the stain I'm using either. And my whiskers, oh, Doc! I'd give good money if you could see these mutton-chops! They are beginning to stick out so I can feel the wind blow through them, and they're just as soft as—as bunches of excelsior! I'm letting my hair grow long and parting it in the middle,—which everyone should do who hasn't a well-balanced head—try it if you don't believe me,—and I'm doing a hydrogen peroxide bleach that would

turn a chorus-girl green with envy,—if not with bleach! You really ought to see me done into sunlight tints! My own wife wouldn't know me. I tried to learn to use a monocle but concluded that a manacle would be more in my line. I have the walk 'down fine,' and have exchanged my 'Yankee twang' for the beautiful catarrhal vocalisation of the London fog. I am painstakingly careless of my 'h's'; can say 'military' without seeming to refer to a sister of Ellen Terry; can pronounce 'literary,' 'secretary' and 'dictionary' so there's only the faintest 'smell' more than three syllables in each; and can say 'different to' without the tremor of an eyelash—my excelsior whiskers are too wiry to be affected by anything I have thus far tried. To-morrow, when we get well out to sea I'm going to see if I can get them used to 'unfrequent.' If that don't take the curl out of them, I shall learn to say 'directly' for 'as soon as' and to substitute 'by auction' and 'by private sale' for our more common 'at auction' and 'at private sale.' If John White can see through such a wonderful disguise as this, it'll be because two heads are better than one, eh?—I will *not* explain it!

"By the way, how are our official friends coming on with the Moreton mystery? Have they arrested Mrs. Moreton yet?—Oh, I say, Doc, about those finger-prints on the murdered man's throat! I promised, if memory serve me, to tell you at some future time, whose hands made them—and I shall certainly do so, if my life be spared till then.

"By the way, I want once more to urge upon you the necessity of solving that most practical riddle which was propounded to both of us on the afternoon of June 13th. How did the murderers of James Eldredge Moreton—for it seems to me there must have been at least two of them—leave the room and take the body of their victim with them while we were all standing in the hallway? I am confident that they did not go out through the ceiling, the floor, or any one of the four walls, unless they were invisible beings and made use of the door passing through our very midst.—'Nonsense!' you say, and I agree with you. It is inconceivable that such a thing could occur in that lighted hallway,—unless, indeed, they had some magical way of rendering themselves invisible—and neither you nor I can make ourselves believe that those perceived uniformities of action which we denominate 'natural laws' have been so violated in this especial instance. What then? They must have passed out in the direction of the fourth dimension.—Now laugh!—That's the regulation thing with the scientifically unregenerate!

"But permit me to inform you that Huxley didn't see anything funny in the theory of four-dimensional space; Gauss and Lobatchewski aren't doing any laughing over it; and the Royal Institution isn't indulging in any undue persiflage upon the subject. You will find very serious references to it in '*Nature*,' Mr.

Doctor, so pray don't overwork your risibilities. *Aut Cæsar aut nihil*,—it's either that or nothing, it seems to me. The murder was committed in a receptacle having six sides, and the corpse was removed therefrom without going through any one of those sides, unless, as I said before, it were taken out through the door in the presence, and under the very noses, of all of us; and you and I wouldn't believe that if we were paid for it.

"Now, the n-dimensionalists tell us that if a four-dimensional being were placed in a hollow, air-tight, steel cube, he would be able to leave it, in the direction of the fourth dimension, with the utmost ease, and without going through any one of its six steel walls. You can't imagine it, of course, any more than you could imagine a third-dimensional escape, were your experience limited to two dimensions. The problem which confronts us is: How did the murderers of James Moreton remove his body from the room in which the crime was committed without penetrating any of its six confining barriers?—Selah! It is next to impossible for the ordinary mind to unthink racial experience, or to conceive the possibility of vistas beyond the grasp of its psychic eye, yet you've got to accept the fourth-dimension hypothesis to save your belief in the impenetrability of matter, haven't you?—(Now don't be mean enough to retort that that is precisely what the fourth-dimension theory most vigorously assaults.) Isn't it that, or else the admission that the murderers of James Moreton, possessing no n-dimensional knowledge, took his body out of a cubical box without making a hole in it?—In the one case you'd have a theory,—such as it is,—and in the other—nothing. In such a dilemma you know what the law of parsimony says. Think it over, Doc. Suppose, now, death were an entrance into a fourth-dimensional existence! Our dear departed might be closer to us than our own clothes, all the time, and we with our three-dimensional experience never dream of it!

"Think of it, Doc! even while you read this your pockets may be full of Borgias! *Heaven help us all!* I can almost feel the slimy clutch of Caligula at my throat! They say children often scare themselves with their own goblin-stories, so I fancy I'd better stop in time.

"Don't give up that cryptogram, Doc. I feel confident it is a most important clue; and we must solve it, even if we have to take it to the Madame.—By Jove! I'm not sure but that's a good idea. She was all right in her directions for finding the body. Suppose you take the thing to her and write me what you get.

I've never taken much stock in such things before, but results are results, and the Madame has shown herself thus far quite the mistress of the situation. She's a wonder, Doc, though, if I were to hazard a guess, I should say she was one of those women who occasionally do things for 'love,'—and other considerations. She

called you 'dear' the very first thing, and no one told her you were a doctor either. I tell you, she's beyond my ken! Try her on the typewriter-nightmare by all means.

"You will probably not hear from me again until I am a Mohakaka pakeha. I shall go directly to John White's tribe, confident that that is his destination also. I suppose you wonder why I left all the home clues I had to take care of themselves, while I posted off after John White. The explanation is easy. They'll keep,—he won't! I must catch him with his victim's head in his possession, or I shall, I fear, be powerless to score. Even in that case, I have no easy game to play. It is more than probable his tribe will refuse to deliver him over to the English authorities, especially if they believe he is likely to be extradited. You will perhaps remember that chiefs have refused to deliver a tribesman before, and that the English government could find nothing better to do than to wink at the offence.

"We may have to kidnap him, therefore, in order to get him within reach of the British Lion's paw. Of course, I shall do a deal of quiet investigating before I take the authorities into my confidence.

"Oh! by the by, Doc. I came near forgetting to tell you something I've learned which makes me surer than ever that the Maori, John White, is my man, and that this whole affair is, as I have said before, but part of a long, long scheme of vengeance. You will remember the Irishman's testimony after the assassination of the elder James Moreton. He informed the police that one of the suspects had said: 'His cane is my head!' and that the other had replied: 'Your head is your own, but the watch is my heart.' Well, now; I have recently scraped an acquaintance with a fellow-passenger who is an old resident of New Zealand,—an erstwhile pakeha Maori, in fact,—by which I mean a white man living among the Maoris,—and he has told me much about their strange manners and customs. One of their institutions arrested my attention instanter, viz.: the institution of *tapa*—not *tapu*—*tapa*. My acquaintance told me that in the old days he had seen warriors, before attacking the enemy, '*tapa*' (if that's good New Zealandese) their possessions to themselves. For example, one would point to a canoe and cry to his companions: 'That *kopapa* is my leg!' while another would indicate the war cloak of an opponent and shout: 'That *tapona* is my face!' the idea being that these things should be sacred to those who *tapaed* them, much as children say: 'I claim that bright red one!' and 'I speak for the biggest!' What Maori, forsooth, would dare to appropriate to himself his companion's face or leg? You see, Doc, how completely this explains the mysterious utterances of the elder Moreton's assassins, on the one hand, and how clearly it shows them to have been Maoris on the other. Oh! Fate had an inspiration when she posted me off after John White! I'm sure of it! I feel

it in my bones, and you, who know how bony I am, will appreciate the great extent of my conviction.

"Remember me to the good wife and family. Try to keep out of mischief. Time's up! Good-bye!

"Yours affectionately,

"HENRY LLOYD HARCOURT (from 'Lunnon')

"*Alias* GEORGE MAITLAND, Boston and New York."

"P. S. Address me, 'Henry Lloyd Harcourt, Nelson, N. Z.,' and I'll leave forwarding orders where to send it."

CHAPTER II

When the killing of his fellowman shall make the soldier good and kind, then shall the dispensing of celestial falsehoods, and the exploitation of the incompetent fearful, trim the Cloth, as its just heritage and adornment, with the ineffable sanctity of Truth's immaculate ermine.

It is a beautiful morning early in September and the great pah or village of the Mohakakas, so delightfully situated upon Hawke Bay, looks like a human ant-hill, so full is it of quiet, yet earnest, animation.

Men and women hurry to and fro upon its principal street, now entering this structure and now that; while maidens "tall and fine,"—the Maori's conception of a beautiful woman,—sit apart plaiting baskets for the coming meal. Older women are presiding over the row of *hangis*, or ovens, in the cooking-houses. These *hangis* are merely saucer-shaped holes dug in the ground. They are two or three feet in diameter and a foot or so in depth.

Almost opposite the cooking-houses two little urchins are diligently engaged in flying kites; while near them are others whipping tops, running, leaping, wrestling, throwing reeds, and playing cat's cradle, of all of which pastimes the Maori is very fond.

A young man is seated beneath the tree near the entrance to the pah. A single glance reveals the fact that he is not a Maori, and a closer scrutiny would lead anyone unhesitatingly to pronounce him an Englishman long resident in some warm climate. Just at this moment his expressive brown eyes are fixed, with an assumed indifference, upon Oraka, the old Mohakaka *tohunga*, or priest.

The old man is saying in very good English:

"I have lived right here in this pah, Mr. Harcourt, all my life; and I have seen our people bait their fish-hooks at the first sound of the cuckoo nigh on to eighty times. I can remember every pakeha my people have had since the day when I first threw a reed, and there were none like unto thee."

As he said this he fastened his small, age-encircled eyes upon the young man before him, as if he would read his very soul. His companion bore this gaze without so much as the flicker of a lash, as he replied with a pleasant smile:

"Yes, I've often been told I'm sort of an odd stick; still, apart from my baby hair, I'm a good deal like other folks. I like my ease; work can be trusted in my presence without a guard; I enjoy good things to eat and drink; am not so good but I might easily be better, nor so bad that I could not readily be worse;—in short, I'm only different to the general run of Englishmen in a few minor points:—in all other respects, alas! I'm hopelessly common. I think, don't you know, it's rather an unfrequent occurrence to find men of such marked individuality that you feel at once they were never ladled out of Nature's general soup-stock. Now *you* are a man, don't you know, who would attract attention anywhere."

The *tohunga's* eyes lighted up with a gleam of satisfaction, and his breast swelled with pride as the younger man continued in a soft, lazy, and insinuating drawl:

"We come into the world, don't you know, a formless mass, at which experience begins to hammer before we have finished our first gasping inhalation. The thoughts we think, the life we live, they are the things which shape us. Great deeds cut strong lineaments into the soul, while the mean, the narrow and the selfish leave

it baby-faced and all but featureless—or worse. One has but to glance at Oraka, don't you know, to see chiselled into his face the grand victories he has achieved, —the wonderful experiences which have been his——!"

"—Somebody has been telling you about me, I see," replied the old man, with such an air of condescension that his companion found it impossible to repress a smile, and so covered it with the remark:

"Ha! ha! people will talk! don't you know, whether it be in England or in New Zealand. Are you not the *tohunga?* Has it not been your duty to recite to the young, that they might commit them to memory, all the deeds of valour of the tribe? How could you leave out your own great part in this history, if your teaching were to be true? Surely you could not. What then? Can you expect your pupils, when they recount the glories of the Mohakakas, to pass by in silence the deeds of their priest and teacher? That were too much, O Oraka! I do not deny it; I have heard enough from others to fire me with a desire to hear the whole tale. Life is so different here, don't you know, to what it is in London, that it intoxicates me. You are right, I am not like other pakehas!—I ought to have been a Maori. What a life! To live and love and fight, with none of the mawkish sentimentality of civilisation to prevent a man from taking whatever custom, and its owner's weakness, will permit. Yes, I have heard of your wealth, your wives, and your great skill with the spear. But I wish to hear about your exploits, as only you can tell them,—as I heard you tell some of them to a young man last night."

"Ah, that was my grandson!—He will one day take my place.—'When the seine is worn out with age, the new net encircles the fish.' What would the pakeha have me tell?"

"Tell me your deeds of daring," replied the fair-haired young man who called himself Henry Lloyd Harcourt, of London.—"But first tell me why I am unlike all your other pakehas,—or better still, tell me what your other pakehas were like, that I may see the distinction myself. One difference, I suppose, is that most of them married some of your fine Maori maidens, a temptation which I have thus far resisted. Is it not so? Do not most pakehas marry your daughters and forget England?"

"Some, but not many," replied the old man. "Most of them have wives already. Of those who are single, some fall in love with maidens already *tapued* to another, and it is not pleasant for a pakeha to cross the heart of a Maori. In such a case he would have to fight, and that would be the end of it."

"But suppose he killed the Maori, what then?" asked the young man. "Surely this must sometimes happen, for my countrymen are brave, and can fight as well as pray,—in fact a good deal better, don't you know."

"I have never known it to occur but once, and that was through treachery. Only once, and then the pakeha did not get the girl. Let me see, that was in the year of the great flood, when we lost the timber we had cut for a new pah. It must have been half a hundred years ago!"

Henry Lloyd Harcourt gave a slight start, which he arrested ere the *tohunga* perceived it.

"Half a century ago, eh?" he said, with a yawn of indifference. "Wonder if I'll ever be able to tell of experiences half a century old. This pakeha was a fellow-countryman of mine, I suppose?"

"No. He was an American. He was a choice man, this James Moreton, tall and fine and strong. I showed

him how to use the spear, and there was not a young man in all the tribe who could reach his breast. He told me many of his secrets, and often came for my advice."

"What did you say his name was?"

"Moreton; James Eldredge Moreton."

"You mean 'Morton,' I suppose?"

"No, 'Moreton';" and the old man traced the letters with his staff upon the well-worn turf beneath the tree which shaded them.

"It's an odd name, don't you know," said the younger man, with an assumed indifference with which he hoped to mask his excitement.—"John Eldredge Moreton."

"James, not John," corrected the old man.

"Aw, yaas! so it is," drawled the flaxen-haired young man.

"So Mr. James Morton,—I mean Moreton,—don't you know,—fell in love with one of the daughters of your tribe, did he? By Jove! I don't much wonder at it. Look at that handsome girl over yonder! I mean the maiden in the fine shawl," continued the young man, as the old *tohunga* seemed at a loss to know to which one of several he referred.

"Ah! the one in Tui's shawl! She is my granddaughter," and again the old man's proud air of condescension was all but irresistible.

"'Tui's shawl'!" exclaimed the young man. "Is the young woman not wearing her own clothes?"

"Peace! The thought is not with you—you do not understand! That too is part of James Moreton's story,—but why should I tell it to you?" and he shot his narrowed gaze into the shadow where the young man reclined.

"For no reason," answered the young man lightly, "unless it be that it's a deuced sight pleasanter for a

lazy Englishman to listen to a tale of great deeds told by one who did them than it is for him to get up and try to do them himself."

The old man wriggled like a fish on the barb of flattery. Deep in his inner consciousness he felt the prick of a hook, yet, for all that, the bait was too deliciously enticing to be resisted, and so, with a single gulp, he swallowed it hook and all.

"I will answer your question," he replied with slow impressiveness. "Deeds are fruits; words are but leaves, and Oraka likes you that you know this. You ask, does not my granddaughter wear her own clothes? I answer, yea. That nice shawl once belonged to Tui, a maiden tall and fine who was *tapued* to Te Wira, our Ariki. I shall tell you of her, but to do so I must first tell you of the American, James Moreton. It is more than fifty years gone that I first saw Mr. Moreton. He came here to be our pakeha. In those days pakehas meant guns, powder, tobacco and tools; and every tribe sought to get one. He was ours, and a choicer man I never saw with a white skin. We were much together. A good companion halves both your journey and your load. He fell in love with a young woman who lived just outside the pah before he had been with us three months. There had been much fighting just before, and no one knew what next year's furrow would turn up, so our people built their houses close to the pah in order that they might have a place of safety in time of danger. Hone Heke, he who married the daughter of the 'Great Hongi,' had but a little while before cut down the English flag at Kororareka; then *Tu*, the war-god, reigned supreme, and Distrust was going up and down the land in a red uniform.

"We wanted powder and guns, and such things came through pakehas, so we were kind to James Moreton.

We would all have eaten fern-root without a relish rather than that our pakeha should not have had the best. He married the woman who lived yonder beyond the great mouth of the pah. Hira was her name, but he kept the marriage secret, and no one knew it at the time but me. All went well till Mr. Moreton met Tui. On the hearth of the heart one flame eats up another; and thoughts of Tui crowded his brain, even as the fish fill the desert waste of the great sea. He would have none of my counsel. All that I could say was but pouring the liquor of speech into a sieve. I told him the maiden was *tapued* to Te Wira, the Ariki, but he would not listen. He swore a great oath that he would have her and pledged me to secrecy. Then came the attack of the Ngatiroa, while the pakeha was in the south. It was like a tempest rising from beneath one's feet. It took us so by surprise that those living outside were even unable to gain the pah. Many of our best *toas* fell that day as falls the grass beneath the foot. Hira, wounded unto death, was taken prisoner. She died in a few days. Nothing now stood in the pakeha's way but the Ariki. After the sound comes the echo; after the wicked wish comes the sinful act. It was upon the thirteenth of June,—I remember it as if it were the day of my first battle,—that James Moreton and the Ariki went up the Mohaka river to the land the pakeha had purchased. They hoped for agreement by talking it over on the ground, for the things we see, see for us. The fact is but the other side of the thought."

The *tohunga* paused as if he had finished his story, and seemed lost in retrospection.

"And this attempt at adjustment; what came of it?" asked his companion with more interest than he cared to show.

"It was all a *kohoru*,—an act of treachery,—an

ambush—a trick to get the young Ariki out of the way!" replied the old man, with slow emphasis.

"And did it succeed?"

"Yea; even as the thrust from the darkness finds the mark in the light!—When the Ariki returned here it was upon a *kaw-shore* borne by two men. He was crazed and dying, and could tell nothing of what had happened to him. And so Oraka, the *tohunga*, and James Moreton, the pakeha, were the only ones who knew. That night the spirit of the departed came through the silence and spake to our sorrow. We begged it to tell us the name of the assassin. 'Ask the pakeha'! was all the reply it made, as it bade us farewell out of that distance which the white man calls 'death.' We all looked at the spot where the pakeha had been sitting. It was vacant. He had disappeared, yet no one had seen him depart. When we opened the door to pursue him a great light broke in upon us, and we knew that some building was burning. Before we could reach it there was a loud report, and we saw in the distance an old man holding a maiden in his arms. Tui had fired the building to distract attention, and then, intent upon joining her dead lover, had placed a gun against her heart, and blown her spirit out into the night to find its eager way to *Te Reigna*, whence she could spring into her lover's embrace. She died in her father's arms. The shawl went to Tui's sister, who gave it to her own daughter, and she, in turn, bequeathed it to my grandchild yonder—so you see that Oraka's family wears its own raiment, and that this is something better than the coarse *purekis*[1] of the rest of our people."

Again the *tohunga* paused as if he had reached the end of his story, and his companion asked:

[1] See glossary.

"And James—James Moreton;—what became of him?"

"I cannot say. Somehow in the confusion he made good his escape. Our fleetest runners were sent out, but they returned without him. We have never seen him since."

"If living he would be quite an old man now, would he not?" asked the young man languidly.

The *tohunga* thrust a stiletto-like glance into the shadow. It lost itself in the nonchalant innocence of the recumbent figure, and he laconically replied:

"He is *not* living. He died on the anniversary of his crime more than twenty-five years ago!"

"On June 13th? What a coincidence! It must have been remorse that killed him, else it would never have happened on the same day of the year!" exclaimed the young man. "I never heard a more remarkable coincidence! They say that you Maoris have such a control over your processes that you can die at will. I think you must have taught that accomplishment to Mr. Moreton. Is it not so?"

"There is some speech which the tongue may not lick up. James Moreton died at will. If it were not his will, then it must have been some other one's," said the old man entangling his companion's gaze.

"Ah, you mean God's will!" replied the other, with a simplicity which disarmed suspicion.

"Maybe so," rejoined the *tohunga*, in a tone that said as plainly as courtesy would permit:—"The interview is at an end."

. . . . .

On the day following a messenger entered the pah with news which must have been of more than ordinary import judging from the commotion it created. It took the flaxen-haired pakeha just twenty minutes to ascertain

what was transpiring, and the news excited him more than it did the Maoris, albeit he remained outwardly lazily indifferent to all that was going on about him.

The messenger brought the news of the approach of Te Maire, who had just returned from an important mission in America; and for "Te Maire" the pakeha read "John White."

The frantic preparations which were made for the approaching man's reception gave eloquent testimony to the great regard in which he was held. Even the old *tohunga* bestirred himself, though with such a bad grace, when he believed himself unobserved, that the keenly watchful pakeha quickly perceived that he relished not the distinguished honours to be paid Te Maire. At length, amid great excitement and acclamation, the visitor arrived, and stood in the great mouth of the pah.

"John White, as large as life, and twice as natural!" exclaimed the pakeha to himself. For a time pandemonium reigned. Then Te Maire and his suite were conducted away to partake of the ample feast now ready to be spread before them. During this repast, which lasted till nearly dark, the pakeha, listen as he might, could hear no word of especial interest to him.

As night drew on, however, he noticed that the different members of the *Runanga* followed Te Maire and their chief to the latter's house.

The pakeha sauntered in the same direction. When he came in sight of the door he found a *rahui*, consisting of a bunch of leaves tied to a stick driven into the ground, for the purpose of giving notice to all comers that the house was "*tapu*," and must not be entered except by those invited to participate in the business in hand. The pakeha knew that entrance was not to be thought of, so he crept as near the door as he dared

and stood motionless in the heavy shadow. He could hear all that passed within. The old chief was the first to speak.

"Listen to me, my children!" he began. "Many, many years ago when the seas fell from the skies and swept over the land, a pakeha killed the Ariki of the Mohakakas, not in fair fight but through basest treachery. A great *karakia* [1] was held the evening of the day after the murder, and vengeance was determined upon. I remember it like yesterday!—Just twenty-five years—no more, no less—after the murder of our Ariki, James Moreton, the pakeha who killed him, was laid low. The murdered Ariki's brothers had all died in the meantime, and the first blow of vengeance fell, as you know, to the lot of two of our fellow-tribesmen having no blood relationship to our beloved chief. James Moreton left a boy and a girl, and another boy was soon born. You know the nature of the vow we made.

"A few months ago it became our duty, under our oath, to kill one of James Moreton's sons, then residing in America. We called the *Runanga* together in this house,—even as we have to-night,—and chose our friend here to do the deed. We shall now hear from him.—How say you, Te Maire, has the younger James Moreton been slain?"

"He has been slain," replied the man addressed.

"Praise be to the Being our ancestors worshipped in the *Morai* at *Hawaiki!*" exclaimed the old chief.

The pakeha outside gently thrust his hand into the bundle of *raupo* lashed to the long sticks close to his head, and forming the weather-proof portion of the walls of the structure, in order that he might make a slight opening against which to press his ear. He had just completed this eavesdropping improvement when the old chief spoke again.

[1] See glossary.

"When was he killed?"

"On the afternoon of June 13th."

"Just as it should be! And you have brought us his head?" There was a fierce earnestness in the old chief's question.

"Alas, O Ruia, that was impossible! I have come back empty-handed!" replied Te Maire dejectedly.

"What was that!"

It was Tiari who asked the question, as he sprang to his feet. His quick ear had heard the snapping of the rushes as the pakeha, surprised into momentary forgetfulness by Te Maire's answer, had suddenly let go his hold upon the bundle of *raupo*.

Tiari rushed to the door, but the pakeha, who had heard his exclamation of alarm, had already made off in the darkness.

"It must have been a *kakapo*," [1] said Tiari as he reseated himself upon his mat on the ground.

The flaxen-haired listener dared not return again to his former coign of vantage.

"The knowledge that I had permanently lost my head caused me temporarily to lose my head in a fashion that well-nigh caused me permanently to lose my head," muttered the pakeha to himself as he glided quickly through the darkness.

[1] See glossary.

CHAPTER III

Most of us regard our exact position upon the wrinkled skin of this little oblate spheroid as one of the most essential factors of existence, quite ignoring the truth that it is only the psychical latitude and longitude which is of cardinal importance,—mere physical location being of little or no account, save as it affects the soul. Thus are we ever prone to acquire a prejudice of locality which, amid much shouting and red-fire, we first proudly christen "patriotism," and then hug to our bosoms till, like the Spartan fox, it eats our hearts out; when, but for our insular folly, we might be drinking great draughts of *real* freedom in some remote Eldorado.

From Hawke Bay to Tasman Bay is a matter of some two hundred and fifty miles as the crow flies. By water it is somewhat farther, yet Henry Lloyd Harcourt,—or to be more exact, George Maitland,—chose the longer route.

Nelson, a town of something more than six thousand inhabitants, is situated upon Tasman Bay, and it was here that Maitland hoped to make the acquaintance of Adrian Canova Moreton, James Moreton's brother, since that was the address given in all his letters.

Arriving in Nelson, Maitland secured quiet lodgings with a private family, and began his search for someone who knew Adrian and through whom he could make his acquaintance without disclosing his real identity; for George had fully determined to take no one in New Zealand into his confidence, but to remain Henry Lloyd Harcourt to the end of his sojourn in this enchanting land.

George Maitland was hungry for an opportunity to express himself to some sympathetic listener. To ease his nostalgia he wrote to his friend Willard:

"*In Medias Res*, New Zealand, Sept. 15, 19—

"MY DEAR DOC:

"I cannot get ahead here at all to my liking,—in fact, the only head I particularly want is not, I regret to say, in New Zealand. John White has returned, but he did not bring back his victim's head, so I must devise other engines for proving his guilt,—if I can,—always *if I can!* The devil of doubt still burrows under the skin of my purpose, you see.

"I have learned that John White, or rather Te Maire, to give him his real name, was unable to bring back James Moreton's head. I had this from his own lips. Oh, no! he wasn't talking for my benefit, else I should not place any reliance whatever upon his remarks. He was addressing the Mohakaka *Runanga*, or Council, in solemn conclave seated, with a sculsh-like bouquet tied to a stick before the door, to warn the *hoi polloi* that the house was *tapu*, or taboo, and must be considered sacred and inviolate. Well, yours truly heard a portion of the remarks by a somewhat ticklish bit of eavesdropping. The old chief said, after a few explanatory sentences: 'How say you, Te Maire, has the younger James Moreton been slain?' to which Te Maire—John White—laconically replied: 'He has been slain.' The chief fired an appreciative remark at some Maori deity or other, and then asked: 'When was he killed?' 'On the afternoon of June 13th,' was the terse reply. 'Just as it should be!' exclaimed the chief. 'And you have brought us his head?' he asked.

"'Alas! O Ruia,' said John White sorrowfully, 'that was impossible! I have come back empty-handed!'

"That's where I came away. The information so disconcerted me for a moment, that I let go my hold upon some reeds with which the walls of the structure were covered, and one of the *Runanga* heard them as they snapped back into place, and rushed to the door. I stood not upon the order of my going, but went at once,—or sooner,—in a way that would have delighted Lady Macbeth,—and I tell you, Doc, I was just barely ahead of the game. You'd better believe I didn't go prowling about any more that night. In less than ten minutes I had been abed and asleep two hours,—if appearances mean anything.

"Well, now, what do you think of it all? Pretty good evidence, eh, that White did the murder; that he tried to bring away the head, but failed to accomplish his purpose through circumstances yet to be explained; and that the murder of the elder Moreton, more than a quarter of a century ago—which occurred, you will remember, on this fatal June thirteenth—was also chargeable to the Mohakakas? What puzzles me—that is, one of the things—heaven knows there are enough others!—is, who were White's accomplices? Certainly there was no other Maori present at the stockholders' meeting, and equally certain is it that no one man ever did the thing alone. I'm sure of that. Those finger-prints

on the victim's throat, you know, were not made by White's fingers—oh dear, no! anyone could see that.

"I don't intend to do anything to alarm White till I beat the bush thoroughly, and have something tangible to bring against him. I know Chief Ruia and the *Runanga* would never peaceably surrender him. He's far too important a personage among them. If I've got to steal him it behooves me to know every trick of the whole game before I indulge in any such *outré* finesse as kidnapping,—least of all kidnapping a Maori giant who is all solid grit from the crown of his head to the soles of his distant feet.

"I am writing this from Nelson, whither I have come in the hope of making Adrian Moreton's acquaintance, not, however, as George Maitland, but rather as Henry Lloyd Harcourt, of London. I am now busy devising engines whereby I may meet him in a casual, off-hand way. This is about all the shop-talk I have for this issue.

"Doc, this is the grandest hand-patch of government on earth! Why, bless your prejudice of locality! which you euphoniously call your 'patriotism,'—when it comes to running a government,—I mean a *democratic* government,—these fellows can give us 'cards and spades' and beat us, 'hands down.'

"Here in New Zealand the government is run for the many and not for the few; and those things which are naturally monopolistic the State itself runs.

"In short, the whole trend of affairs here, Ned, is to abolish both millionaires and paupers. The New Zealand people are the most joyous on earth, and you'd be delighted with them, if only they'd get sick oftener. The low death rate will horrify you, and lead you to believe your profession has no representation here,—I leave you to determine which is cause and which effect! It is the lowest of any nation, being less than 10 (9.6) in a thousand. No smallpox, no typhoid, and no—but I shall 'queer' the place for you forever if I keep on. Death really occurs here, though, for a man died in Nelson less than a month ago.

"I must go now to see if I can get acquainted with Adrian Moreton.—I suppose our official friends, Sheehan and Burke, would think me crazy, if they knew what I was trying to do. They don't have a very high estimate of my friend, Maitland's, ability, but—let me say for him what his strait-laced Puritanism won't permit him to say for himself, viz.:—'Sheehan and Burke be blowed!'—providing it can be done, of course, without still further puffing them up!

"Love to all. Hope to have something of interest to report ere long.

"Sincerely your friend,

"George Maitland (when 'done brown');

"Henry Lloyd Harcourt (when done in peroxide yellow.)"

As soon as he had finished this letter Maitland went out to look up Adrian Moreton. After some inquiry he learned that he was treasurer of a mining company then interesting capital to further open up its property. He was told that the mine was located near by and that, in all probability he would find Mr. Moreton there. Proceeding thither in the early afternoon, he suddenly espied, as he rode into a little clearing, an elderly man and two horses partially concealed by a clump of bushes. A single glance told him that the old gentleman was a Maori. The *moko*, or tattooing, upon his face was, as *mokoes* go, a rare work of art, and George doubted not that the *whakairo* upon his hips and thighs was an equally commendable bit of workmanship.

He bowed affably as Maitland drew rein in front of him, and said;

"You found our path rough, I'm afraid.—You are looking for Mr. Moreton, I suppose?"

"Yes," Maitland replied, quite taken back at the man's cultured manner of speech.

"He's prospecting up yonder, half a mile or so," said the Maori. "It was too rough for the horses, so he asked me to mind them here, while he went on ahead. He's only going to get one or two samples for a man, and will be back directly. Will you wait, or shall we hitch the horses and go meet him?"

"I would prefer the latter, if agreeable to you," Maitland replied. "I have a poor set of waiting nerves."

While the Maori was tying the horses George had a good opportunity to observe him. He must have been at least six feet five inches tall, though he was so well proportioned that his great stature was far less in evidence than would have been expected.

Twenty minutes later Maitland and his guide arrived at the spot where Mr. Moreton had been prospecting.

They found his tools, and two cloth bags filled with sample ore, beside one of those little mountain cascades in which New Zealand abounds, but the gentleman himself was not to be seen, neither did he respond to the Maori's call.

"Perhaps he has gone farther up the stream," suggested Maitland.

"Maybe so," laconically responded the Maori as they proceeded to ascend a steep incline.

They had not advanced a dozen yards before Maitland pointed to a slip of paper thrust between the halves of a newly slit twig.

"Suppose you examine that," he said. "If it have any significance at all, it is doubtless meant for you. The twig, you see, has just been split."

A strange look came into the Maori's face, now ashen pale, as he reached a trembling hand for the paper. For a moment he held it irresolutely, as if not daring to gaze upon it. At length, with clenched teeth and features rigid and drawn, he lowered his eyes to it for a single glance at the penciled characters, when, without a word of warning, he fell like a log to the ground.

Maitland seized the paper which had dropped from his nerveless hand, and read as follows:

"Good-bye, Tomo! I am taken and am to die. You were right. You will understand! God bless you! 'Adrian."

CHAPTER IV

A lie, like an indenture, will fit nothing but a counterpart manufactured for that purpose. Every truth in the universe makes a close joint with every other truth; but a falsehood cannot successfully be placed in any mosaic which has in it a single block of truth. Sooner or later great seams of inconsistency will inevitably appear, and he would indeed be a sheolic genius who could hide these cracks from a keen vision for any considerable time.

To say that Maitland was dumfounded at what had just transpired would be to state the fact homeopathically. He bent over the prostrate Maori and rolled him over, so as to bring his face uppermost. A pallor, like unto death's last film of ashes, was spread upon it. Maitland rushed to the stream hard by, filled his hands with water, and, returning, dashed it in the Maori's face. A faint gasp acknowledged its receipt, and a mere suggestion of colour flickered timidly back into the cheeks. He determined to dash some of the cold water upon the man's chest, in the hope thus to increase the respiratory action, and, to that end, he tore the Maori's clothing away from his throat, and laid bare his breast, when an involuntary exclamation of surprise escaped him; for there upon the left breast, just over the heart, was the mysterious figure which seemed to confront him at every turn! It was tattooed into the skin with rare plainness and precision. What did it all mean? A long-drawn sigh proceeding from the prostrate figure served to recall Maitland's mind to the more immediate business in hand, and to send him hastily after more water. Before the Maori had fully recovered George had determined, to his own satisfaction, that he was the Tomo to whom the note was addressed and that

Tomo was probably none other than the native Adrian had mentioned in his letters to his brother James.

"How do you feel now?" Maitland asked, as his patient raised himself into a sitting posture and looked about him in a dazed sort of way.

"Feel? Why, I'm well—never was better. What has happened?" he asked.

George passed him the paper by way of reply.

"Ah, yes!" he continued; "it all comes to me now. I have lost him,—lost him forever! lost the best friend I ever had!" and great tears chased each other over his dark cheeks.

"You are Tomo, are you not?" asked Maitland, hoping to divert his attention.

"Yes, I'm Tomo, Tomo whose life he saved when no one else dared! It was in the mill over yonder. The shaft then was only down some fifty feet or so. I had just lighted the fuse to a heavy charge and was making for the hoist, when I struck my head against a crib-timber and fell down unconscious. Mr. Moreton was looking down from the top and saw it all. He ordered the bucket up, and asked if anyone would go down and get me. It was almost sure death. The charge was liable to explode at any moment and none of the workmen would risk it. Before the bucket had reached the surface he himself sprang into the shaft, caught the windlass-rope, and slid down into it, while he called to the engineer to reverse the engine and lower him down. How he ever pulled me into the bucket with him I never knew, but he did it in some way. The charge exploded just as we reached the surface, throwing us both violently out of the shaft, but not hurting either of us, beyond a few bruises.—You see now, sir, why this note makes me like a child," and he wiped the tears away with the back of his hand.

"I understand, Tomo, and I respect you the more that it is so," said Maitland softly, as he gently laid his hand upon the other man's shoulder. "One does not meet such friends every day."

"And all the while I—I was planning to harm him! That is what I came to work at the mine for!" continued Tomo, conscience-smitten.

"And why did you wish to harm him?"

Tomo hesitated and looked doubtfully at the inquirer.

"Yes, Tomo, you can trust me," George replied, in answer to the look. "I am entirely friendly to Mr. Moreton's interests,—in fact it was the interests of his family which brought me here, though you must not let anyone know what I am about to tell you. Mr. Moreton's father was killed by the Mohakakas, and James Moreton, Jr., Adrian Moreton's brother, has just fallen a second victim to the same bloody vengeance. Adrian warned him,—I have seen the letters—but it was of no avail. On the thirteenth of June he was murdered. In these warning letters Adrian referred to one of his miners, whose life he had saved, as the source of his information. Are you not the man?"

"Yes! I will tell all!" Tomo replied. "I came to work for Mr. Moreton that I might watch him. I was one of those pledged to kill him should he marry. Te Maire was sent to look after the other brother in America. We had both sworn a great oath. Mr. Moreton's father had killed the Ariki of our tribe when we were children,—but that was not all——"

"—Not all?" Maitland interrupted. "What else had you against him?"

"This! He had married my oldest sister, and had left her without so much as a word and married another woman——!"

"—But you should not blame him for that. He did not

really leave her; she was taken captive in his absence. When he returned he learned that she was dead."

"He lied when he said so!" exclaimed Tomo, fairly bristling. "He basely deserted both his wife and child. My sister lived for twenty-five years after that,—with the flame of longing burning ever in her heart,—and died as she had planned to die,—the very day her husband was killed! The poison of pain had turned her love to loathing and disordered her mind. She pledged both me and her child to endless hate. The little one was young, and forgot—I was old enough to remember, and I *did* remember, and later took good care to fill my niece with my own vengeful spirit. She grew to womanhood, married, and had a daughter. This child I consecrated to vengeance when a mere babe, tattooing upon her bosom, with my own hand, the Sign of the Thirteen. My sister taken captive, indeed! Oraka persuaded her to go away, because, as he said, a dangerous rival was trying to win her husband's affections. It was not until the day after she left that the pah was attacked. The *tohunga* promised my sister that he would send her husband to her, but his utmost persuasions, as he told her afterward, were of no avail. Moreton was determined to desert her, and he lied when he said she was taken captive and died."

"But it was not he who said it. It was—someone else," replied Maitland, suddenly deciding not to give his informant's name. It was a time for action, rather than discussion, and the mention of the *tohunga's* name in this connection could well be reserved for a future occasion. George had learned much that he was glad to know, and his mind was very busy with his doubts.

"What do you propose to do, Tomo?" he asked, as they reached the horses. "Certainly no time should

be lost in attempting a rescue. Had we not better hurry back to town and notify the authorities?"

"I do not think so. Those of us who were sworn to execute this vengeance upon the elder Mr. Moreton,—and, should occasion require it, upon his sons also,—agreed upon a plan of action which was to be followed as nearly as circumstances would permit. To make our revenge the more perfect, we were, if possible, to desecrate the body of the dead. The greatest disgrace a Maori can inflict upon an enemy,—one that extends to his children and children's children,—is to eat his body and to bake his head," Tomo replied. "We hoped to be able to get still further satisfaction by selling our victim's head to some of his own countrymen, for exhibition in a museum. To do this, we should have to tattoo it,—in order to make a real New Zealand head of it,—before we killed our victim. All this we expected to do, but when we learned that Mr. Moreton had gone to America, all hope of such perfect vengeance died within us. We might be able to bring back his head, but we could not expect to tattoo it. As you know, we did not even succeed in that. Now, in the case of my employer, things are different. He is here on the ground, and an attempt will be made, I am sure, to make a feast of his body, and to tattoo his head. The missionaries will tell you that cannibalism is extinct, and so it is, for the most part; but there are some things which missionaries do not know."

"Do you mean to say that you think they will eat your employer?"

"If possible, yes," Tomo replied. "Their plan will be, I am sure, to take him to some out-of-the-way place where they can tattoo his face. This is a long operation. When it is finished, they will secretly issue invitations for a great feast,—a feast of 'long white pig,'

as we Maoris call it. They will—will kill and eat Mr. Moreton's body, and—and bake his head—after the custom of my people! Herein is our only hope of saving my dear master. Unless his captors become alarmed, or hard pressed, they will not kill him for at least two weeks. That is why we must say nothing to the police. They would at once start a noisy chase, and upon the first intimation of their approach Mr. Moreton's captors would kill him, and escape with his head. If we are to accomplish anything, we must work quietly."

"I understand your plan," George replied. "Let us separately return to town, and do you give it out that Mr. Moreton has suddenly been called south, and may not be back for three or four weeks. I say 'south' because, in all probability, his captors have taken him north. They are Mohakakas, and will not feel secure till they are in the vicinity of their own people. I am myself a Mohakaka pakeha, and may be able to be of some assistance to you on that account. I will at once return to the tribe where I will await your coming. You will not, of course, let it appear that we ever have met before. When you arrive we will find some way to communicate with each other without exciting suspicion. I think we had better separate now, lest we be seen together; and I will get back to Nelson, and off north, as soon as possible."

. . . . .

"The pakeha is back!" was the word which, a few days later, passed from house to house in the Mohakaka pah.

Henry Lloyd Harcourt had indeed returned, and with him he had brought sundry boxes and bundles, the contents whereof weighed heavily upon the curiosity of more-that one Maori, who observed him as he entered

the greath mouth of the pah. Conspicuous among these was no less a personage than Oraka, the *tohunga*.

Henry Lloyd Harcourt singled out the priest, and bestowed upon him an especially warm greeting, slyly placing in his hand, with a little convulsive squeeze, in lieu of a more elaborate oral presentation, a small round box, neatly wrapped in paper. It contained a fine silver watch, the ticks of which, echoing through the old necromancer's cavernous and all-engulfing vanity, would soon, the donor felt sure, indissolubly mix themselves with his veriest heart-beats. In this he made no mistake.

Tomo's story of his sister's relations with the elder James Moreton had raised a swarm of doubts in Maitland's mind. That Oraka had lied to him, seemed a foregone conclusion. In pursuance of this conviction he had determined upon a course of procedure before he left Nelson. The watch, half a dozen bottles of champagne, and a box of scientific apparatus were some of the more concrete portions of this plan, and they were no sooner properly bestowed than he made haste to begin his campaign.

His house was at the extreme western side of the pah, near a small and but little used gate looking inland. The main entrance, or "great mouth" of the pah, was upon the eastern side, facing the sea. This arrangement suited Maitland's purpose admirably, since it gave him the semi-seclusion he desired, and enabled him, if necessary, to leave the pah unobserved, or under cover of night secretly to admit a visitor through the little gate.

As soon as he had put his small house to rights,—for absence is as much the accomplice of the rust and the moth as it is of the thief,—he filled a tight pocket-flask with champagne, and sauntered forth to en-

counter the *tohunga*. This was no difficult matter, for the old priest was watching for him, full to his lip-tattoo of wordy gratitude for the watch.

When the *tohunga* had exhausted himself, so that even *he* noticed the hollow, chesty ring in his words, he permitted Maitland to speak.

"Of what new deeds of valour has Oraka bethought him, during his pakeha's absence?" he asked, seating himself in the shade of his favourite tree.

"When memory is harnessed with age, the pace is slow, my son," replied the old man sententiously. "A thatch of snow makes winter in the house of the mind; and in winter the sluggish stream freezes quickest; still, an old man's spade sticks ever in the past, and new-old deeds are constantly unburied."

"Well said, O Oraka! In your mine of memory there's a nugget in every shovelful of experience!" exclaimed the designing Henry Lloyd Harcourt, with his frankest smile. "Come, now! let's at it like Maori chieftains! Toss me whatever jewel is uppermost in your mind, while I stretch out here, like a lazy Englishman, and pour this wondrous libation to a white man's gods," and he took a silver flask from his pocket and held it ostentatiously aloft.

The old man's eyes narrowed to a covetous crack, as he said, reaching for the flask:

"What is that, my son?"

"It is the laughter of the grape! the sunshine of Marne! the warmth of youth! the ecstasy of love! the key to paradise! the white man's gayest dalliance—champagne!" exclaimed the young man.

"Have I not heard your missionaries say the laughter of the grape is a mocking laugh?" asked the old man severely.

"Yea, truly, and so it is," replied his companion.

"Touch it not, O Oraka! lest you dream such dreams as will make you unwilling to awake."

"Soft is the white man's mouth, e'en as is that of the *kahawai*, and smooth as the skin of the seal are the words that drip from it!" said the aged man, with slow emphasis. "It is for the young to fear dreams, not the old. Let my words be a warning to you, my son. In far-away Hawaiki, whence came my people, the winds sung ever a sweet-scented song of summer. Desires, thrown upon the generous earth, rooted in hope, blossomed in promise, and fruited in fulfilment. Blessings lay, like an ungarnered harvest, so thick upon the land that sadness could not strike root through them. The sun was in every face; in every heart a lily. The *tui* learned its song from our maidens! The sea, and the *taro*-pit, gave us food, and, wrapped in a loving climate, a piece of *tapa* cloth was all the additional shelter we needed.

"Our gods were at our right hand, and a wish was but half a thought,—fulfilment the rest. Hunger swam in a lake of milk and honey, and Thirst drank the scented dew that brimmed the lily's cup. Love was the air we breathed.—Then came the accursed discovery that the fermented juice of *kawa kawa* would produce strange dreams; and all was changed. Discord, arm in arm with Hate, stalked up and down the land. The fathers of my people gave themselves up to superstition, cruelty and lust. Debauchery reigned supreme. A few, indeed there were who fought this liquid demon, and these organised the '*Runanga*,' a secret reform society, which tried in vain to hold back the great black wave. They were but a handful against a besotted horde, and were finally driven from the islands. Hither they came in ten double canoes, and brought with them the institution of the *Runanga*.—Such, my

son, is the dreadful story of the fluid which explodes like a mine in men's brains, and blows their thoughts to the stars of the upper air. Take heed! Take heed! The time to repent is before the match has been laid to the train!—What manner of water is this?" asked the old priest, as he unscrewed the flask and brought it to his nose.

"Some call it fire-water," replied the young man, with a face deeply lined with pain and anxiety. "It is a wonderful fluid!"

The *tohunga* raised it to his mouth to drink.

"Stay, Oraka!" shouted his companion. "My lips have pressed the flask! It is not meet that one of your exalted rank should drink from it," and he held out his hand for it.

"You say well, my son," replied the priest, without offering to return it. "It is, indeed, *tapu*, but I have power to remove the *tapu* to a distant place. See!" and he made mysterious passes with his free hand as he continued: "The *tapu* is here; the *tapu* shall be removed. Take away the dread! Take away the fear! Take away the danger! The *tapu* is being borne away! See! it is gone; and the *tapued* thing is free and clean!" with which exclamation he placed the shining flask to his lips and completely drained it. "It is a good water, and harmless," he said, smacking his lips. "I shall be obliged to keep this little can, my son, since my drinking from it has made it very *tapu*, or sacred. Were it glass I should break it; but as it metal there is nothing for me to do but to keep it," with which explanation he carefully secreted it upon his person.

"If that isn't absolute zero," exclaimed Maitland to himself, "it's the nearest point thus far obtained! Jove! it just collapses me, as if I were an atom which had reached the Ultima Thule of coolness! A 'crust'

like that would make good skating in Tartarus. If he were there he'd be the finest thing on the ice,—the very cream of Tartarus, as it were!" After these somewhat vigorous intramural reflections, the flaxen-haired young man focussed his sweetest smile upon the old *tohunga* and said:

"I am glad you like this harmless water. You do not find it at all *heady*, do you?"

"The thought is with you. I do not understand," replied Oraka.

"I mean," continued the young man, "that it does not affect your head—doesn't make you giddy."

"It is no more than air, my son. I could drink a barrel, and keep every drop below my neck. It is perfectly harmless; no one need fear it. Alas! that the juice of the *kawa kawa* root was not like unto this!" and the old man heaved a *peculiar* kind of sigh.

"I am, indeed, glad to hear you say so, for I have several bottles of it at the house, and am going down directly to take some myself."

"If you'll go now, my son, I'll go down with you. I feel twenty years younger than usual, and the walk will do me good. By my spear! there's nothing makes a man so young as young company! Come on! I'd race you to the little gate if no one was looking," saying which the old man scrambled nimbly to his feet, seized the younger man by the arm, and hurried him eagerly down the street toward the little gate.

. . . . .

Fifteen minutes later they were both seated upon rush mats placed upon Harcourt's floor. Each had a bottle beside him. The younger man's bottle was all but untouched, but from that of the *tohunga*, the "harmless water" had disappeared clear down to the kick.

In order that the kick might be kept in the bottle, Mr. Harcourt was just placing another "original package" of the innocent liquid within easy reach of the *tohunga*, as he asked:

"Do you remember telling me, a while ago, about a Mr. Moreton? I thought you would. You're young yet. Well, there's one part of the story I can't quite make out, probably I didn't get it straight."

"I can remember—hic—every word I told you.—Whash story was it?"

"Why, the one where you played the trick on Moreton. You sent his wife away—told her someone else was making love to her husband, and that if she'd go he'd follow; and then, when Moreton returned after the attack on the pah, you told him his wife had been captured and had died. There aren't many men who could have managed that so cleverly, Oraka."

"Yesh! but that—hic—ishn't anything to—to—hic—the resht of it!"

"Oh, no! of course not. Have some more of the water," and the young man held the bottle toward his companion.

The *tohunga* took a long draught, as the other continued:

"But how did you get rid of Moreton so easily?"

"Ha! Ha! thash the besht part of it—hic—I made 'em all think 'twazh Moreton killed the Ariki, an' he had run away. Ha! Ha! thash the funniesht part of it—hic—funniesht part of it!"

"By Jove! but that was clever. You wanted him out of the way because,—because,—it was some mighty clever reason—what did you say it was?"

"There wazh *two* reasons:—hic—firsht, I wanted Te Wira out of the way sozh to get an Ariki I could influ'nce—influ'nce; second:—hic—I wanted Tui; an'

third:—I hated Moreton, 'caush he sided wizh—hic—wizh the Ariki—againsht me,—so I got Haimond Patone to kill Te Wira, an'—an'—then I poishoned *him* sozh he couldn't tell. Howzh that for a tre—hic? Ha, ha, ha! funny—funny trick, eh? Te Maire—I hate Te Maire —been making—hic—fool himshelf trying to kill everybody—hic—for whash they didn't do! Ha, ha! I fool him, too—an' thash the besht yet! Ha! ha!" and, quite overcome with the "harmless water," he fell over upon his mat, chuckling to himself in maudlin glee, and was soon deep in a drunken sleep.

Henry Lloyd Harcourt hid what was left of the champagne, secreted such belongings as he particularly prized, and sauntered out into the open air, taking care to place a *rahui* before the door, so that his house might be considered *tapu*. Only in this way could he hope to prevent the *tohunga's* drunkenness from becoming the common talk of the pah. While he was tying a bunch of leaves to a stick for a *rahui*, who should pass by him but the stalwart Tomo. Each saw the other, but neither one gave the slightest sign of recognition. Maitland's quick glance toward the woods at the north end of the pah was only observed by Tomo, and had another seen it, he would have attached no significance to it.

The Maori passed out of the little western gate, while the white man went in the opposite direction, and left the pah by its main entrance. Once outside, both men turned north toward the woods, and soon met in a secluded place. Maitland at once told Tomo all he had so recently learned from the drunken *tohunga*. To say that the Maori was horrified at this tale of perfidy would be to do scant justice to his feelings. His first impulse was to return to the pah and slay Oraka forthwith; but Maitland was easily able to show him the folly of such a rash course.

"Does Te Maire—or any of the other Maoris, for that matter,—know of your disaffection, or have they any reason to suspect that you are hostile to their plans?" Maitland asked.

"No," replied Tomo promptly. "They could not possibly suspect it. I have never confided my change of heart to anyone, save Mr. Moreton, and I pledged him to secrecy. I had no occasion to act, you see, unless Mr. Moreton was married; so they cannot think I failed in the performance of any duty. If they thought so, they certainly would not have permitted my master to write me the note we found. That, in itself, is evidence that they considered me safe, and felt sure the information would not be disclosed."

"But how do you account for it that your employer's assailants did not take you into their confidence?" George asked.

"I do not account for it," the Maori replied; "unless —unless they were impatient for vengeance, or hungry for human flesh, and knew I would oppose any such unauthorised haste. If so, they might think it best to leave me out of it."

"Yes; that might easily be the case," said Maitland. "As you are in good standing, then, with all your people, I would suggest that we get back to the pah as quietly as we left it, and that you find some way of getting yourself introduced to me in the presence of several of your friends. This will give me an opportunity to disclose to you in due time Oraka's confession. When I have done so, it will be perfectly natural for you secretly to confide to Te Maire, as your companion in vengeance, your information and the doubts it has raised in your mind. It is more than likely he will think I am lying and ask for proof,—at all events, it will be essential that he should have it. You will suggest to

him that I be asked to substantiate my accusation, if I can, in order that you may be sure of your ground. You can tell him that I have offered to try so to arrange it that both of you may hear Oraka's confession from his own lips. In the meantime, I will lay my plans to bring about this important consummation. Do you see any difficulty in effecting what I have outlined to you as your part of the undertaking?"

"None whatever. My part is easy. It is the task you have reserved for yourself which I regard as well-nigh impossible. Oraka will probably remember his drunken indiscretion, and refuse to become intoxicated again," said the Maori somewhat dubiously.

"Leave that to me, Tomo, and I will do my best. I think I can accomplish my purpose," responded the other hopefully. "Later on, I shall need your assistance and will explain my plan; but one thing at a time. For the present our objective point is Te Maire. If we can convert him to our belief, he will doubtless be able at once to cause the release of Adrian Moreton."

"Unless my employer's assailants have made a bridge of Te Maire's nose, too,—and they probably have, if actuated by the reasons I have suggested as possibly applying to my own case," Tomo added, by way of amendment.

"True; but even so, Te Maire would, I think, have power to reach them. He is too high in the councils of the tribe to be trifled with. I'll go back now to my drunken guest. I shall not have to ask you to work diligently, or impress upon you the great value of time at this juncture. Good-bye!" and the two men parted, and made their separate ways back to the pah.

* * * * *

The Mohaka River [illegible] gigantic bow just before

it debouches into Hawke Bay. The general direction of this bow is westward from the sea, and it would require a bow-string something like twenty-five miles from tip to tip to string it. Just at the inland spring of this arch, a short tributary, rushing down from the foot-hills of the Te Whaiti mountains, empties into the main stream. If you traverse this little affluent a few miles in a northwesterly direction, you arrive at a small brook which enters it from the west, its source being but a few miles away among the mountains. At this point the country begins to assume a rugged aspect. High hills, the whispered promise of the mountains just beyond, silhouette their rocky, dentated, and declivitous outlines, like castellated ramparts, against the towering citadel they seem to guard.

High up one of these hills yawns a long fissure in the granite wall. From the level ground it is merely a slightly irregular line of black, hard-drawn upon a slate of light grey; but, seen close at hand, it is the entrance to a flume of no mean proportions, through which in geological periods long past there gushed a mighty torrent. Terrific escarpments rise, black and threatening, from the old river-bed, while, at the farther end of the narrow passage, like the cap covering the objective of a mammoth telescope, is a sheer curtain of rock, pierced at its base by a dark and yawning hole. It was from this opening that the old subterranean fluid sculptor issued, ages and ages ago, when he carved his name, in days immemorial, into this cyclopean bequest to all eternity.

Man, in a mathematical sense, is the reciprocal of nature; and thus it is that the racial habit of looking for correspondences between environments and the acts occurring in them has become deeply rooted in all of us.

Name a dark deed, and the hearer's imagination

paraphrases it with a dark place as its natural *locale*. Show a gruesome spot, and deeds, bristling horrent with the live hair of fright, make dramatic a hell of thought.

Between this fearful fissure among the foot-hills of the Te Whaiti mountains, and the deeds it now environs, there is no jarring note. The ratios are all true and consonant; the chord, that of absolute horror!

Bound upon the ground near the entrance to the cave is Adrian Canova Moreton. His limbs are tied to stakes driven into the earth. A leathern cap is fitted tightly about his head, leaving only the bearded face bare, and from this covering, in the vicinity of the ears, extend two straps which also are secured to stakes driven into the ground. Upon a rush mat by the head of the prostrate man sits a Maori tattoo-artist. In his left hand he holds a little bone chisel, and in his right a curiously shaped mallet. At his feet is a small dish of pigment, which, if he accurately follow the customs of his race, should consist of charcoal, gum and vegetable extracts. A tiny palette of red ochre rests upon the ground at his right hand. He has just used it to sketch upon the prisoner's face the portion of the design he expects to tattoo at this sitting, and he is now slowly pounding the chisel into the quivering flesh of the prostrate man. The operation is very painful, and but a small area can be done at any one time. The artist is proceeding with a deliberation which seems little short of devilish. Now he drives the little bone chisel a few times into the victim's face till the blood flows freely. This he carefully wipes away, after which he rubs the dark pigment into the wound; then, a few more stabs of the little bone torment, and so on, bit by bit, till it seems to the prisoner as if he would surely lose his wits, if the torture did not cease. When he can endure it no longer he cries out to his torturer:

"Enough! I can stand no more! For God's sake drive that thing through my heart, and let it end here!"

The artist proceeds with the work as if no protest had been made.

"There is but little more to be done to-day," he at length volunteers.

There is a long silence broken only by the groans of the sufferer.

Then the Maori, rising from his sitting posture, unties the ligatures which hold his subject to the earth, removes the leathern casque from his head, gathers up his tools and utensils and prepares to enter the cave.

"Have I not heard them call you 'Wi Tako'?" asks the white man.

"Yes; since you will never live to tell, I do not mind admitting that Wi Tako is my name," the artist replies.

"So I am to be killed, am I?" asks the white man, though he already knows what the answer will be.

"Yes," responds the other laconically.

"Well then, since dead men tell no tales, there can be no possible reason why you should not tell me all about my captors' plans."

"There is nothing we need conceal, Adrian Moreton, and nothing that you will be the better off for knowing. If you ask questions I shall most likely answer them; but if you take my advice, you won't talk about your prospects," replies the Maori.

"I thank you for your warning, Wi Tako," says Adrian, "but I'd prefer to know what is in store for me. In the first place, what offence have I committed that I am to die?"

"Listen; I will tell," responds the Maori. "Your father killed Te Wira, our Ariki, more than fifty years ago. We vowed vengeance upon him and his. Our oath did not require us to molest his sons, unless they

should marry. Your brother *did* marry, and, in the hope that we might at least get his head, we sent our best chief, one of our *Runanga*, after it. He has just returned—returned empty-handed! What happened to your brother you already know."

"But why do you seek my life,—I have not married," questions Adrian.

"You were about to leave New Zealand to attend to your brother's affairs. America is a long way off, and, when it should come your turn to die, we would again be unable to secure a Moreton head, or to taste a Moreton's flesh. You are our last chance for real, satisfying revenge. To kill one's enemy is *nothing*,—he must be chewed, and his head cured, if vengeance is to have any soul in it! Of course, you might never marry, but it suits us to consider that you surely would. It was Pomare's thought that we make sure of you, now when we could get both your head and body, and he went secretly about enlisting whomever he could in his cause. He dared not let any of the chiefs know what he meant to do, for fear they would forbid it, so our little party was chosen with great care. Those whose desire for vengeance was not strong enough to lead them to risk the *Runanga's* displeasure, he tempted with the promise of a great feast of 'long white pig.' That was enough! Many of us had not eaten human flesh since we were children, and remembered it as it tasted to our boyish hunger. The rest you know."

"You intend, then, to tattoo and cure my head, and to eat my body," says Adrian with a visible shudder. "And then, what?"

"Then we shall sell your head to some American museum, as a fine sample of New Zealand head,—and —and my work will be admired by thousands!" replies Wi Tako, with evident pride.

Adrian Moreton rises to his feet and looks quickly about him.

"Who are those men out there at the entrance to the flume?"

"They are guards posted there to catch you, should you think it wise to try to escape," answers Wi Tako, with a meaning smile.

The prisoner resumes his seat.

CHAPTER V

The popular definition of superstition is: "the other man's religion." The Namaquas believe the moon is made of bacon, yet they doubtless would consider the solemn conviction of certain Brazilian tribes, to the effect that a solar eclipse is an attempt on the part of a monstrous jaguar to swallow the sun, as a most absurd, ignorant and ridiculous superstition. And so is it nearer home. Most of us so-called Christians hang our faith, as if it were a hammock, between an unthinkable God and an impossible Devil, and then lie down in it, for a long, intellectual, Rip Van Winkle sleep. Once in a great while we hear some suffering sleeper cry out in his agony: "Every time I think another thought I get another pain!" and we know that some poor denizen of Sleepy Hollow has been awakened by the cruel stab of a real thought. Fear, in forming the substratum both of religion and superstition, pays an eloquent tribute to their blood-relationship. Says the Immortal Bard: "I see you have some religion in you, that you fear."

Of Tomo's integrity Maitland felt perfectly assured, yet his long habit of taking nothing for granted, where it was possible to subject a matter in hand to actual test, led him to go to Napier, where he could obtain indisputable evidence of the marriage of Tomo's sister to the elder James Moreton. Then, too, the project he had in mind would require the assistance of at least one other besides Tomo, and it would be essential that this other should be able to manipulate certain apparatus necessary for the accomplishment of his purpose. In a good-sized town many such could be readily found. There were also some few items of his equipment yet to be procured.

When he had secured just the assistant he wanted, the two men set out together for the pah of the Mohakakas, or, to be exact, that was Maitland's objective point,

while the young assistant was to remain as inconspicuously as possible a short distance away until wanted.

As matters fell out he did not have long to wait in inaction. Maitland had no sooner returned to the pah than Tomo informed him that Te Maire had been unable to believe Oraka could be guilty. He had demanded proof, and had seemed deeply impressed when informed that an effort would be made to enable him to hear the confession from the *tohunga's* own lips, if he would but consent to let the pakeha order his movements in the matter.

"I will do anything,—everything, Tomo," he had replied, "to have my mind set at ease! If this thing be true, I have taken human life without just cause! Back to the pakeha! Tell him I will keep his secret, and do his bidding, but I must have proof—absolute proof!"

"We will do our best to produce it," Maitland had replied when Tomo repeated Te Maire's words to him.

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"Your modesty, O Oraka! does you much credit; but, seek as you may to hide your light under a bushel, you cannot snuff out its brilliancy. I hear of your deeds on every hand. Your powers in this world I can understand, now that I know you, for I have seen *men* in my day! But how you are able to summon the spirits of the Great Beyond to do your bidding, I cannot comprehend, never having seen anything of the sort."

The speaker was a flaxen-haired young man with fluffy, "mutton-chop" whiskers, and the person addressed was the old *tohunga.*

"My son," replied Oraka, with slow impressiveness, "ever and anon heaven lends earth a man. He tarries for a brief span, performs some grand mission, and is then caught back to the skies whence he came. I come

from the heavens; my ancestors are all there; they are gods, and I shall return to them!"

For a long time the young man kept the solemn silence that followed the old man's words.

"They told me how you once called forth the spirit of an Ariki, yonder in the forest beneath the very tree which had held his bones," he said at length in an awe-aspirated voice; "and he had been dead for more than twenty years."

"Ay, so was it!" replied Oraka. "It was the spirit of Te Wira,—he who was murdered by the American. I caused it to come to earth, and to tell my people how they should conquer their ancient enemy, the Rarawa."

"What would I not have given to have seen this demonstration of your spiritual power! There are priests among my people, but they do little but talk." He paused a moment and took several coins from his pocket. "But for the fact that Te Wira has been dead too long for you to recall his spirit," he continued, "I should say to you, O Oraka!—'do you see these five bright golden coins? If you will take me to-night to Te Wira's burial-tree, and call up his spirit as you did before, they are all yours,' and, if that were not temptation enough, I should add one of those two superb repeating rifles I showed you the other day. But, alas! your power over a man's spirit ceases after he has been dead so long." He noisily returned the golden coins to his pocket.

The old man's eyes were narrowed in eloquence of greed. He was thinking of the gold; thinking of the rifle,—a repeating rifle!—a long tube full of deaths!—thinking how, again and again, in bygone years, he had bartered his soul for a mere musket; thinking what he could do with the money, and what he *would* do with the rifle; and when a tempted wrongdoer makes in

advance a mental disposition of the wages of his sin, the Devil considers the transaction closed.

"Who told you, my son, that my power was measured in years? It was wrong to trifle with your ignorance. You should not believe all you hear, neither should you stake your money and your goods where they can be so easily won. I am more than half-minded to accept your challenge and take your wager, that it may be a lesson to you in future."

"What! you do not mean that you could call back the Ariki's spirit after all these years, just as you did before!"

"Yea, my son; as readily now as then."

For a moment the young man was silent, and in that brief period all his enthusiasm seemed to vanish, and to give place to a critically sceptical mood.

"Ah, well!" he said, with a shrug of the shoulders, "we Anglo-Saxons are a doubting tribe, and so you must pardon my unbelief, Oraka. It is the study of exact science which undoes our faith. The church should redouble its efforts to have nothing but classics taught in our educational institutions, if it would maintain its hold upon us. You must not think, O Oraka! that this is any special distrust of you. It's in my blood and I can't get it out. I'm not a 'sport,' and I do have great confidence in your power, as you know; yet, so sure am I that, in this instance, my doubts do not mislead me, that I dare make the five coins ten, and add to them both the rifles."

"Enough!" shouted the old man eagerly. "Your folly be on your own head! You hurl the *toroai* at my feet, and cannot complain that I snatch it up! No man shall set a bound to my power! Ten pieces of gold, and the two guns that bite and bite again and again without feeding,—that is *your* part. From *me*, the spirit of

Te Wira to be called back to-morrow night, just as before, beneath his burial-tree! Is that the compact?"

"Yes," replied the young man.

"Very well, then; leave me, my son, for I would search out the Ariki's spirit, and make this thing known to it." And the *tohunga* rolled his small eyes inward, and dropped his chin upon his breast, to indicate that already his soul had left this vale of tears.

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Just before midnight the rising moon disclosed three shadows flitting about under Te Wira's burial-tree. Each figure was armed with a spade, and began diligently to dig as soon as the moonbeam reached the little forest clearing in which the hollow *rata*-tree stood. The trio consisted of Tomo, Maitland and Robert Stetson, the young man Maitland had secured in Napier. They were busily engaged in digging two little, shallow trenches in the form of a immense V, the apex of which was in a thick clump of gigantic ferns and bushes, while one free end was at the roots of the burial-tree, and the other at those of a smaller tree situated some eighty feet away, upon the western edge of the little clearing. When the trenches were completed, tin tubes, neatly jointed, were laid in them, the earth carefully replaced upon them, and leaves raked over the disturbed soil with such care that the closest observer would not have detected anything amiss. The end of the tube at the roots of the burial-tree was provided with a little blind-well, cleverly concealed by a covering of boughs. The divergent end of the other tube was supplied with an upwardly-looking elbow, into which was inserted a vertical section of tube thirty feet or so in length, tied at intervals to a young sapling just large enough neatly to conceal it.

The upper end of this pipe carried an elbow, which was

carefully adjusted with its opening obliquely downward toward the trunk of the burial-tree. At the apex of the V the two tubes, each provided with a little throttle-valve, entered a common mouthpiece, concealed in the ferns and bushes beyond all danger of discovery.

By talking into the mouthpiece, and opening first one valve and then the other, a hollow, sepulchral voice would proceed, now from the ground beneath the burial-tree, and now from high up in the air, at the opposite side of the clearing.

Tomo had one of those full, deep, cavernous, bass voices so admirably suited to the portrayal of the senior Hamlet; and when he spoke in the mouthpiece the words set down for him by Maitland, and worked the valves as directed, the effect was weird, gruesome, and uncanny. The illusion was certainly perfect. The idea had been suggested to Maitland by the well-known talking head of Albertus Magnus, which the worthy Thomas Aquinas took the liberty to reduce to its lowest terms—with a hammer. In the present trick, however, the deception was far more perfect than it was in its ancient prototype.

When the tubes had been sufficiently tested, and Tomo had become "letter perfect" in his part, the men dug a trench just in front of a clump of *tutu* and *koromiko* shrubs a little to the right of the burial-tree. In this Maitland put certain chemicals he had procured, after which he loosely covered the trench with boughs, and placed in the end nearest the apex of the tubes a little arrangement he had devised, whereby the chemicals would be ignited when Tomo should pull a string, which was carefully threaded through the bushes to his place of concealment. The chemicals contained a generous proportion of sulphur, in order that they might burn persistently, and with but little illumination, giving

off, the while, a dense smoke and an unmistakably Calvinistic odour. The method of igniting the train was simplicity itself. The pulling of the string upset a few chips of metalic sodium on to a little pad of blotting-paper, moistened in water to which starch had been added, and arranged just below one end of a short powder-fuse, the other end of which was buried in the sulphur mixture.

The object of all this was to produce, against the forest background, a dense curtain of white smoke, upon which Maitland proposed to exhibit certain lantern projections which he had himself drawn and coloured with the utmost care. Nothing now remained but to make a suitable place for the lantern, and to instruct Mr. Robert Stetson in the part he was to perform. As this young gentleman was an expert with the magic-lantern and was using his own instrument upon this occasion, he required but little rehearsing. Maitland selected a tree about eighty feet from the trench containing the chemicals, and, with the assistance of his companions, erected a little platform high among its branches. Upon this the lantern was placed, and its beams tested, after which the limbs of neighbouring trees were bent and lashed, so as to perfectly screen both the lantern and the platform. Then the beam was again tested, to make sure no leaf or twig interrupted its path. This completed the night's work and, after Maitland had once more gone carefully over his entire plan of campaign, the sleepy trio broke up, each feeling that he had a deal to confess to his pillow, with time far too scant for its telling.

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Again it is night. The forest, sleeping in its gay suit of green, like some St. Patrick's Day inebriate who retires without the customary preliminary of disrobing,

has drawn over itself an inky coverlet quilted down with stars. No sound breaks the stillness, save the confidential whisper of a gentle breeze punctuated, at regular intervals by the notes of the wingless *kakapo*, who has crept from his hole and sauntered forth into the business of the night. A warm vapour, laden with turf odours, rises from the ground, as if the earth were some cyclopean sleeper breathing upwardly into one's face. The huge tree-trunks, black and ill-defined in awful possibilities, stand like horrent ghouls awaiting the demon word to spring and make a vulture's feast.

What if one of them be the *macoro* creeping hither to drink warm blood; and no time to scare him away by a *karakia!*

Hark! what sound is that? Two men are slowly tracing their way hither by the light of a lantern. The taller one, who is using his spear for a staff, is the old *tohunga;* the other, Mr. Henry Harcourt.

"Take this lantern, my son, and gather wood for a fire," says the old man, as they reach the tree. "It may be long ere the spirit arrives. Old marrow is porous, and the night air blows through it."

Maitland does the priest's bidding, and satisfies himself that his assistants are at their posts, and that Te Maire is present. This last named gentleman is resting on his spear behind a tree so close at hand that Henry Harcourt all but utters an exclamation of surprise when he discovers him.

The fire is now built under the burial-tree and the two men roll themselves in blankets and lie down beside it to await their spiritual visitation. Hour after hour passes.

The young man's eyelids have become leaden heavy, and the old man is snoring noisily. The fire is now a mass of glowing coals.

Hark! That is not the wind! Henry Harcourt sits up and rubs his eyes. Again, and this time nearer, comes the moaning sound, now audibly articulate.

"Speak, O Oraka! why have you called me back again after all these years?" asks the voice.

The old man makes no answer, but continues his stertorous serenade, as if nothing had happened. The young man holds his peace, and observes closely all that transpires.

"Awake, O Oraka! The breath of Te Wira is here! What would you have?" comes in a distinct voice from the tree just above them.

The *tohunga* moves uneasily, like one who is about to awake.

"Arise! Arise, Oraka! Te Wira is come!" says a deep voice from the ground directly beneath them.

"Who calls?" asks the *tohunga* between gapes, as he sits up and looks about him.

"The shade of Te Wira, O Oraka! You summoned me, and I am come. Greetings to you, my best of friends! To the pakeha, greetings! What would you have?" comes in a strong voice from a point just behind them.

"Question the spirit, my son, and it will answer," directs the *tohunga*.

"Tell me, O Ariki! who caused thy death," says the young man in awe-stricken voice.

"The pakeha! James Moreton, the pakeha!" comes the prompt response from the upper air.

The young man coughs a little nervous cough, and, as if in answer to it, a cavernous, rasping, blood-curdling laugh rolls up from the roots of the burial-tree.

The *tohunga* springs to his feet and gazes in abject horror in that direction.

Again comes the awful mocking laugh, followed by an unearthly voice.

"The spirit lies! It is not the Ariki! Its name is Oraka! Behold! I am Te Wira!"

This time the voice comes from high up in the trees behind them.

The old man, with his grey hair erect upon his head, his countenance ashen pale, and terror shaking at his every limb, turns toward the spot whence the voice proceeds. A stifling odour of sulphur pervades the air, and a sickly bluish light plays about the earth just in front of the bushes to the right of the burial-tree. Then comes again the awful mocking laugh, its bubble-like gutturals bursting from the ground almost beneath their feet, followed by the words:

"I say the spirit lies! It is Oraka, not the Ariki, and it dare not show itself. Behold *me*, and say if I am not Te Wira's spirit!"

There is a flash of light and a ghostly form is seen to rise from the ground. At first its outlines are cloud-like and indistinct, but as the old man, with eyes starting from their sockets, stares at the awful presence, it assumes a definite shape,—the shape of the young chieftain, Te Wira, the murdered Ariki! The old man lets fall his spear and staggers back into the young man's arms. He assays to speak, but his throat is filled with hot sand, and Horror grips the hinge of his tongue.

"You have asked me who killed me," continued the presence. "Tell him, O Oraka! and *this time* tell the truth!"

The *tohunga* would fall but for his companion's support.

"I—I do not know," he gasps.

"Thou liest, Oraka!" comes in awful tones from the

ground beneath his feet. The apparition raises its spear and advances. "*Down on thy knees and speak the truth before I blast thee!*"

The old man drops to the earth.

"Mercy! Mercy!" he shrieks in grovelling fear.

"Mercy! What mercy showed you me! Mercy! Ha! ha! ha! ha!" gurgles the bubbling laugh from the roots of the burial-tree; and "Ha! ha! ha! ha!" comes from high up behind them.

"Speak, O Oraka! ere I wither you where you kneel. Who killed Te Wira?"

"Haimond Patone! Mercy! have mercy!" hoarsely cries the old man.

"And who hired him to do it, and then fastened the crime upon the pakeha?—Speak and speak truly, or *Atua* in lizard's shape shall eat your vitals."

Again the apparition raises its spear.

"Mercy! Have mercy! 'Twas I—I hired him. Mercy! I'm an old man, mercy!" and he falls from his knees prone upon his face.

The awful laugh is heard again from beneath the burial-tree, and then high up in the air. The apparition slowly fades and soon vanishes altogether.

Henry Lloyd Harcourt turns and looks about him. Te Maire, spear in hand, is at his very elbow.

"I thank you, Mr. Harcourt!" he says, speaking with difficulty. "You have shown Oraka to be the basest of murderers, and stained my conscience with much innocent blood; yet better that, than that a groundless vengeance should continue." He picks up an armful of wood and throws it upon the fire. Then, going to the *tohunga*, he stands for a moment in silence looking down upon him.

"Get up, O Oraka!" he says at length, prodding him with his spear.

"Who calls Oraka?" demands the old man, whose assurance has in a large measure returned to him.

"It is I, Te Maire!"

"Oh, only Te Maire! Te Maire, whose great-grandfather was chewed by the Patupo when hungry for blood-meat! Te Maire, indeed! What has Te Maire——"

But the other does not suffer him to finish.

"Enough!" he cries in a voice which makes the old man tremble, though he will not permit his enemy to know it.

"Rise up! Rise up, Oraka! Rise up, you traitorous murderer, for this night I shall kill you!" and Te Maire pricks the old man with the spear.

With an agility surprising in a man of his years, the *tohunga* springs to his feet and seizes his spear.

"Thou hadst ever a deep throat but shallow sinews, Te Marie!" he cries defiantly.

"Thou wilt find either deep enough to drown thee, Oraka!" retorts the other.

"Oh! bale the water out of thy mouth!——"

"That I may fill it with thy blood—it shall be done!—Stand forth that I may kill thee!" and Te Maire rushes at the *tohunga* with leveled spear.

The old man meets him with a blow that well-nigh disarms him, and has the effect of recalling him to his more sober senses. In his day Oraka had been the first spear among the Mohakakas and, although size and strength are in Te Maire's favour, the priest's superior skill renders the contest all but equal. The larger man suddenly realises this fact, and settles himself for a long and careful conflict. It will not do for him to make a single mistake, for the great skill of his adversary would never pass it by. He pauses, therefore, in his headlong rush and manœuvres for an opening.

"'DOWN ON THY KNEES AND SPEAK THE TRUTH BEFORE I BLAST THEE!'"

Oraka, who fears only that his strength may give out, dreads a long conflict, and seeks to taunt his opponent into making a rash charge.

"How say you?" he cries to the onlookers. "Would not a boy do better with a reed? Te Maire is a coward whose words pour out like the ocean, but whose deeds come drop by drop. His courage is all in his legs, as you will see by and by!" and he makes a vicious lunge at his opponent, who narrowly escapes being impaled upon his spear.

A look of grim determination settles upon Te Maire's face as he advances, with cat-like caution, upon his agile antagonist. He understands clearly the *tohunga's* purpose, and avoids the offensive as much as he can, and still not give Oraka breathing space. Both combatants constantly shift about the fire in the attempt to secure the advantage in the matter of light. In so doing Te Maire passes in front of a log. Instantly his opponent seizes his opportunity, and charges furiously. Te Maire steps back to cushion the onslaught. His heels strike the log, and, in the attempt to regain his balance, he momentarily lays himself open. Swift as thought Oraka's spear enters the breach, and pierces his left arm.

"Ha! I shall chew thee soon!" cries the old man tauntingly.

Fortunately for Te Maire his wound is not serious, though the blood is flowing freely from it. He makes no reply to the *tohunga's* taunts, but quickly catches the old man's spear with the point of his own.

For a moment the two weapons play about each other with circular flashes of light, and then Te Maire gives his opponent a sudden whip-like stroke, so forcibly delivered that it crowds him back and brings him to his knees. The old man is hard pressed, but he does not lose

his presence of mind. Te Maire, following up his advantage, impetuously hurls himself upon his kneeling foe, and, for a moment, the end is plainly in sight. Just as his spear is about to enter the *tohunga's* breast, however, the old man falls adroitly to the right, avoiding the thrust, while, at the same time, he dextrously trips his onrushing opponent with the butt end of his spear, bringing him to the ground.

With the agility of tigers both men spring to their feet and again face each other. Te Maire is grim, quiet, watchful and determined. Oraka is flushed and angry, and his breath comes quickly. The protracted exertion is beginning to tell upon him. Again he tries to enrage his antagonist by the worst insults which can be visited upon a Maori.

"No wonder thou art a coward! As the dog is, so is the pup. Thy great-grandfather was chewed; thy grandfather was a *tutua,* a no-account *pikau-man;*[1] thy father was taken prisoner; thy mother was a slave; and I remember well when thou thyself wert but a *hapu* man,—a mere serf. I shall honour thee overmuch in killing thee!" and he makes a mighty lunge at his antagonist's heart. Te Maire adroitly side-steps it, and assumes the offensive. His face is ashen pale; his brows narrowed; his jaws set! The *tohunga's* insults, being founded on fact, have at last pierced his armour of patience. The effect, however, is not altogether what Oraka could wish, since Te Maire merely becomes furious without in the least relaxing his vigilance.

Again the spears catch and circle about each other, and again the whip-like stroke nearly brings the older man to his knees. He retains his feet, however, but is badly shaken. Te Maire sets a terrible pace for him to follow. The spears clash with a rapidity which defies the eye and confuses the ear. Oraka's guarding grows

[1] See glossary.

sluggish, and he narrowly escapes being pinked. His mouth is open and he is gasping for air.—He is wholly on the defensive now.

Again the spears play about each other, and again the terrible whip-like stroke,—this time in an upward direction,—shakes the old man. He clings to his spear with every ounce of strength he can command, and the shaft breaks off close to his hand. He has barely time to close his eyes ere Te Maire's weapon transfixes him, and he falls a limp mass upon the ground.

The victor withdraws his spear from the wounded man, and thrusts its bloody point into the fire, as if to cleanse it. He evinces no elation, and he utters no word.

The stricken man turns partly over and tries to indicate that he has some confession to make. His lips move, but only inaudible whispers come from them. Finally, as if by an almost superhuman effort, he voices the words:

"Te Maire—James—Moreton's—child——" But at this point his voice again dies to an inaudible whisper.

Something of grave import seems to weigh on the old man's conscience, to judge by the almost frantic efforts he appears to be making to speak.

Maitland goes to him and bends low to listen, but the dying man motions him away and manages to whisper the name, "Te Maire."

"The message is for you, Te Maire," says Maitland.

The victor kneels by his prostrate foe, and bends low his head to listen. The wounded man's voice becomes audible.

"Te Maire, take—take that!" he cries, as he plunges a dagger into his enemy's breast.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! If death be fern-root, this is a relish! Ha! ha! ha! ha!——"

But Te Maire seizes him by the throat, and chokes to silence the demoniacal laugh.

Maitland and Tomo rush forward, and the former is about to draw the dagger from the kneeling man's breast when Te Maire deters him.

"Suffer it to remain," he says. "I shall last longer if the blood be kept back.—Write as I dictate—as quickly as possible," continues Te Maire, with great effort.

"To the *Runanga*. James Moreton was innocent of our Ariki's death. Haimond Patone assassinated him.—Oraka bribed him to do it.—I heard him confess it, and have killed him for it. He has done for me, also. Tomo and the pakeha will give particulars. In killing the elder Moreton I spilled innocent blood. Make what amends you can. His grandchild still lives. Her name is Alis Ora Leigh, and she wears upon her bosom the brand of the Thirteen. Tomo knows her.—Oraka poisoned Haimond Patone. Farewell! Farewell to you all, O my people!—Have you it written?"

"Yes," Maitland answers.

"Then let me sign it," replies the other, for the first time removing his hands from Oraka's throat.

The universal Destroyer has varnished the old priest's staring eyes with the dead-finish of death, and primed his face in ashes, for the painting of the grave.

Te Maire takes the paper and while Maitland and Tomo support him, the young Stetson holds a board for him to write upon, he slowly and painfully affixes his signature.

"You will deliver it at once—Tomo—" he says, with the death-rattle already in his throat.

"And how about those who have captured, and are planning to kill, Adrian Moreton?" Tomo asks, fearful lest his question may come too late.

"I—I know—nothing of them—I did not know he—had been molested," says Te Maire.

"But you killed the father?" says Maitland.

"Yes,—Tomo's brother and I. He's dead—and—I——"

"—And you killed his son, James, too," George interrupts, fearful lest death may rob him of Te Maire's confession.

"I—I went—to America—for—for just that purpose. I—became a follower of—of Rachel Eichberg because—she had International Wireless stock. I wanted to—get to the meeting as someone's proxy—so I induced her to—make me her—representative. I—meant to—kill Moreton—after—the meeting,—when I could—get his head,—but I lost my temper at an outrage—he put upon me, and forgot everything but the—the indignity and—and precipitated—a quarrel at the meeting.—The lights went out—and—and——"

"And in the darkness you struck him down," again interrupts Maitland.

"I—I meant to kill—him—after the meeting,—and—and—his blood, too—is on my soul!" replies the dying man faintly.

"Yes, yes, I know!" says George impatiently. "You *meant* to kill him after the meeting, but you *did* kill him just as it was called to order. Is it not so?"

"No! I—I killed the father, but my hand—never harmed—the son! I am—innocent of—the—*act*,—though guilty in—intent.—Good-bye!"

. . . . .

John White, or Te Maire, is dead.

Henry Lloyd Harcourt, or George Maitland, is dumfounded.

CHAPTER VI

Death is the last item in Life's column; the ending link of its noisy chain; the closing figure of its phantasmagoric dance. Why, then, should a man care what characters will be written after his total is struck? Can he fear that its sum will be altered? What does it matter to him whether his body be reduced to its lowest chemical terms *via* the digestive apparatus of man, of vultures, or of worms, since thither is it bound in any event? Alas! we are not all philosophers; and the streaming filaments of uprooted sentiment float across the yawning chasm of the open grave, and out into the Great Unknown. The temple of the soul will still be our erstwhile home after it is tenantless, wherefore glowing memories cast bright, throbbing beams of hope, and long, dark shadows of fear, into a future taciturn, echoless—*silent.*

On the morning following Te Maire's death both Maitland and Tomo were summoned before the *Runanga*, or Council, that they might tell all they knew of the affair.

Tomo did most of the talking, and described the events of the last few hours with a particularity of detail for which the Maori is certainly justly celebrated.

As soon as Maitland was dismissed by the *Runanga* he hastened to his house to read a letter he has just received from his friend Willard. It ran as follows:

"My Dear George: I have yours written from Honolulu. You would scarcely believe me if I told you how overjoyed we all were to hear from you.—But I must tell you the news. Shortly after you left, the officers began to make life a burden for Charles Bertram. They shadowed him everywhere he went. What they expected to learn by chasing this gentleman and his lady all over New York, they have never, thus far, confided to the public. Well, as you once remarked, 'Charlie Bert' is an odd stick, and he didn't catch the humour of the situation,—if there were any. You will remember that almost his entire interest is given to four things, to wit: 'The Eichberg,' as they call her; the study of anatomy, athletics, and chess. About the first I know but little,—the gentle sex being

rather more in your line than mine. As for the second, I have been told by those who profess to know, that he can dissect a cadaver in a way that would be a revelation to many an old anatomist. My informant also dropped the hint that more than one of the bodies, which the recently convicted gang of grave-robbers confessed to stealing, passed under Mr. Bertram's scalpel. His fondness for surgery amounts almost to a mania. In respect to his third great interest—athletics—he assuredly excels. His strength surpasses anything I have ever witnessed in the unprofessional world. I have seen him place the palms of his hands beneath the elbows of a man weighing one hundred and ninety pounds, raise him from the floor, and carry him in this position across the room, with such ease and steadiness that you could not even hear his steps upon a hardwood floor!

"It seems that Burke and Sheehan's constant espionage worried Charlie a deal more than he thought best to admit. I noticed his daily increasing pallor and nervousness, and tried to ascertain what caused it all. He made me evasive replies, and I finally concluded that something had gone wrong in his relations with Miss Eichberg. Imagine my surprise when I learned, a few days later, that 'Charlie Bert' had assaulted Officer Burke with a surgical instrument while that functionary was shadowing him. But for the fact that the thing occurred on a crowded thoroughfare where assistance was plenty,—Broadway, near Bleecker, at 2 P. M.!—it would have been all up with one of your stupid rivals. It took six men to disarm Charlie, and when the whole seven finally got into the 'hurry-up' wagon, it was an open question whether the six put Charlie in, or he put them in,—everybody seemed pleased to *get* in. Well, at the police station they ascertained that the prisoner was as 'crazy as a loon,' and removed him at once to an asylum. What reason do you suppose he gave for assaulting Burke?—Guess again! No; once more! That's your third strike! Well, sir, he said Burke's left eye toed in and he was only going to cut the *rectus internus* muscle to straighten it! They did just right to arrest him! What would become of us doctors were such free treatments permitted? I couldn't help thinking about the chap Maudsley tells about, who committed a crime in the hope that he would be taken back where he could see the windmills.

"Bertram's mind had become unhinged by the worry and annoyance of the officers' suspicions, and it may be that there was a measure of fear mixed with it. When I looked into his history it was all as inevitable as lying among lawyers. His father was a dipsomaniac; his grandfather committed suicide; his mother had hysteria, and his sister is a deaf mute. You have, perhaps, noticed that the pupils of Charlie's eyes are not of equal size, and that there is a slight peculiarity in his articulation. In fact, 'Charlie Bert' and his sister are the last links in a long chain of

degeneration extending far back in both his mother's and father's families. The alienists believe Charlie will soon be cured, relying much,—too much, perhaps,—upon his splendid physique, and the results of two similar attacks which he has had in the past.

"I visited him yesterday, and he appeared perfectly rational upon all subjects, and discussed his condition with rare good sense. So much for that.

"I have seen Eric Montrose several times. He tells me he hopes to get the affairs of The International Wireless in satisfactory shape before long. He believes Moreton's death was the best thing that could have happened for the company, and I guess he's right.

"I called on Elbert Reiss yesterday, and met Mrs. Moreton there. She is as young and beautiful as ever. They were in the inner room, and the artist was playing a violin selection to her. I paused in the studio,—the music held me spellbound! The fellow plays like a great *maestro*. Strange, isn't it, that in nature's lottery one man draws half a dozen superb talents which group themselves into genius, while the next fellow draws only the plentiful blanks of mediocrity and insufficiency? It's blank injustice!

"Reiss is looking thin, pale and haggard—can you imagine it? As a physician, I have no hesitancy in pronouncing him a sick man. The dominant note in his music was like the despairing cry of a lost soul, and the same hopeless appeal is in the man's eye. I grew womanish looking at him.

"Miss Sherwood has been away from New York for a week or more, now, I am told. Her physician became alarmed about her health and sent her into the country.

"Oh, by the way, George, I took that typewriter-nightmare which you call a 'cryptogram'—though I think 'cryptogam' would be a better name, since, so far as I can see, the thing is never likely to blossom into any visible importance, or to bear any perceptible seed or fruit;—I took it, I say, to the Madame as you suggested. She was 'right glad' to see me, as they say out West, and quite willing to undertake the solution of the cipher—for a consideration; though she told me in advance that she could guarantee nothing, and that I must be contented with what 'they' gave her. 'They,' in this sense, is in number, singular or plural; in gender, masculine or feminine; in tense, present—or absent; in mood, subjunctive, with a big 'if,' and in voice (in this case), active and silent, for she used a pencil as before, and rested her hand upon one of those wooden grasshoppers on wheels,—you know what I mean,—a *plain-cheat*, or some such name; one of those things which you scientific fellows explain,—to your own satisfaction, at least,—by what you call the 'dominant idea.' What do you suppose she wrote?

"I did not wish to trust the Madame's paper to the mails, so I placed it against a window-pane, superimposed this sheet upon it, and traced off the original, line for line, as you see it here.

"'The interests of the living forbid the translation of this cipher. Let it be destroyed and forgotten.—'JAMES ELDREDGE MORETON.'

"Now, the astonishing thing, George, in connection with this affair, is the indisputable fact that the handwriting is an enlarged copy of the dead man's own hand. I got several letters from Dr. Carew which Mr. Moreton had written him but a few months before his death, and traced from them the composite parts of the above communication. The likeness virtually amounted to identity, in all save the matter of the size of the characters! How do you account for it? Isn't it wonderful? I confess, the Madame has me guessing. Of one thing, however, I feel morally certain, viz., if that rebus is ever to be solved, you'll have to do it.

"So you're a 'Britisher' with yellow mutton-chops, eh? I should think that your ship would require a torpedo-net to keep the mermaids off! My! but you must look,—to use the appropriate and fetching vernacular,—'just too awfully nice for anything!' Don't shave the sweet things off, George. Many a man, if he carefully explored the source of his success, would soon find himself entangled in his own whiskers. There isn't anything on earth, of the same actual weight, that is psychologically so ponderous as a whisker! But shout folly through the right kind of a beard, and an admiring public will read such wisdom into your twaddle, as shall well-nigh crack your pate in its bump of self-esteem.

"No; Mrs. Moreton has not been arrested as yet, though I hear that our official friends have an eye upon her.

"Concerning your conundrum as to how the murderers of James Moreton took his body from the room while a small army of us guarded the door, I have nothing to offer,—or less. Upon this subject my powerful mind is a clean blank,—the most immaculate thing, in fact, about me. I might tell you perhaps,—but I won't!—who owned those myste-e-rious fingers, but upon this other matter you must consider me an unreplying void.

"In regard to your exposition (maybe you didn't *intend* to expose it) of the four-dimensional hypothesis, I can only say that I find my head possessed of but one dimension, namely, *thickness*. If I can get rid of *that* I shall be a point, and may be able to see the same.

"I suppose, ere this, you have found your head, or learned that it is gone forever. All well and send love.

"Good-bye and success.

"Your friend,

"EDWARD WILLARD."

A little after sunrise, on the day following Te Maire's funeral, Tomo called at the pakeha's house, and aroused its occupant from sleep. He had just received an important and urgent communication. During the night a slip of paper had been placed in one of his shoes, how, or by whom, he was powerless to say.

He handed the paper to Maitland who, sitting up in his bed, read aloud as follows:

"To Tomo: We demand absolute secrecy of you. If not prepared to grant it, read no farther, but burn this at once!'"

"Whoever wrote that understood human nature, I must say!" interpolated Maitland.

"If you wish to be one of us, and can be trusted, read on! We are to feast to-night, as soon as it is quite dark, upon a long white pig which we have caught. It will be fine eating! It seemed too bad that you, who knew the white pig so well, since you were set to watch him, should not have a taste. You will understand.

If you are with us say nothing, but come at once. Follow the Mōhaka River westward for about twenty-five miles. Just before it turns in a southerly direction a tributary enters it from the north. Follow this toward the Te Whaiti Mountains, and you will come to a brook which flows into the stream from the west. Stop here and look at the hills. You will see a long fissure high up in the rocks. Go to it, and when near enough to be heard, call 'Tomo' thrice, and await my coming. If you would partake of the pig's choicest cuts, be there by dark. Remember; no word!

"Your fellow-avenger,

It is nightfall in the flume near the Te Whaiti mountains. A large *hangi* has been prepared and is already alight. Within plain sight of this primitive oven sits a young Anglo-Saxon with newly tattooed face. By his side is a pile of food-baskets woven from the leaves of the flax plant.

The young man is Adrian Canova Moreton, and he is at this moment trying to reconcile himself to the fact that in less than an hour his decapitated and dismembered body will be cooking on yonder pile of hot stones; while in less than three hours it will be eaten from the baskets beside him, by the very men with whom he has lived for the last few days.

When he can endure the suspense no longer, he calls one of his captors to him, and asks:

"How long is it before I am to die?"

The Maori glances at the *hangi* and replies:

"As soon as the stones are red-hot."

"And how am I to be killed?" questions the prisoner.

"I shall drive this little dagger through your heart, and then behead you," the other answers, exhibiting a dagger with a curiously shaped handle.

"May I look at the weapon?" the captive asks.

The Maori makes no reply, but passes him the dagger.

Adrian examines it closely, and sees upon the blade the fatal hieroglyph, with which, alas! he has become so familiar. He mutters a short prayer, closes his eyes, and raises the weapon aloft to plunge it into his heart! He will at least die by a friendly hand. Before he can accomplish his purpose, however, his captor has arrested his arm, and taken the weapon from him.

"Oh, no; that would never do!" he cries.

"Since I am to die and be eaten, what can it matter to you by whose hand I fall?" Adrian inquires.

"It *does* matter greatly!" exclaims the Maori. "I am but doing the will of others. This feast has been entrusted to my care by the council of *Te Toke*, a secret society organised to reap in earnest the vengeance with which our *Runanga* has but played. If, without good cause, I fail in executing my orders in any particular, I shall soon disappear from my friends, even as you have

disappeared from yours,—and that will be the end of me."

"Why is the society called '*Te Toke*,' or, as we would say in English, '*The Worm*'?"

"Does not the white man say that the worm will turn when trodden on?" asks the Maori. "The members of *Te Toke* mean to sting the foot that has crushed one of their brothers."

"But it is not my foot," objects Adrian.

"It is all the same," replies the other. "The son grows to the father's boot, and your religion teaches us that the suffering of the innocent may atone for the sin of the guilty. What we are about to do, therefore, is pleasant in the sight of your God."

At this juncture a young Maori approaches, and says: "The stones are red-hot, O Patupo! All is ready for the long white pig!"

Adrian's heart sinks within him, but he springs to his feet determined to battle in a hopeless contest for his life. A trio of young warriors spring upon him from behind, and, after a brief but fierce struggle, the white man is overpowered and securely bound with withes of *wiwi* rush.

Patupo approaches him with the dagger, and cries in a loud voice:

"Behold, brethren in *Te Toke!* In the name of *Vengeance* and *The Worm*, I make you the *feast of the long white pig!* Shade of Te Wira look down upon us, and see how well we remember!" He raises the dagger to strike, but pauses as his victim fixes him with a steadfast gaze.

"Avert your face!" he commands; "your eyes disturb me."

"And well they may, Patupo!" exclaims the white man. "You are about to spill innocent blood, and my face and

my spirit shall ever haunt you! If the dead can take on animal form, there will soon be a lizard tearing at your vitals! Now strike! I will not avert my face! I have lived with my eyes open; so shall I die. Let me turn toward the light!"

There is something in the white man's voice that awes his captors, and they suffer him to face the fire. "Strike!" he commands; "and make a lizard of me, that I may gnaw your inwards!"

The face of Patupo wears an inexplicable expression, as he lowers his arm irresolutely. Perchance it is due to this worst of all threats which can be visited upon a superstitious Maori, and perhaps it results from some real qualm of conscience. However, be the source of this executioner's hesitation what it may, he speedily overcomes it, and again raises the dagger aloft. The weapon is close to the prisoner's breast in its descent, when a loud voice calls out from near the entrance to the flume.

"Hold, Patupo!"

Patupo stays his arm, and looks in the direction whence the sound proceeds. A man is running toward him at breakneck speed. When about twenty paces away, he suddenly halts and exclaims: "Quick! a word with you alone!"

The executioner hurries to him.

"Speak, Matuku! What has happened?" he cries in an excited voice, quite audible to his intended victim.

"Tomo is yonder with a score of white men! They have already begun to climb the hill, and every man has a rifle!" replies Matuku in feverish haste.

"What is to be done, Matuku? Shall we leave his body here and strive to escape with his head?" asks Patupo.

"That would mean death to us!" replies the other.

"Tomo has betrayed us. If we *kill* our captive they will follow us relentlessly. If we *spare* him, they will not dare to press us too closely lest we kill him in order to lighten our burdens."

"And you would suggest——?"

"That we swear him to leave New Zealand; to permit himself to be reported as dead; to change his name, and never, on pain of a death worse than that he now escapes, to make known to his family, to his friends, or to any other human being, that Adrian Moreton still lives."

"But *Te Toke*?"

"*Te Toke* need never know. We will say we killed him, but could not secure his head. He cannot conceal his identity from us, for we know his *moko*. If he does not leave New Zealand, and keep away from America, we can easily reach him. We have nothing to fear from any other countries."

"How long before they will be upon us?"

"A matter of twenty minutes. Their progress is slow, because they dare not use a light."

"There's much sound sense in what you say, Matuku, —though my mouth waters to taste once more the sweet flesh of a long white pig. Let us see if the prisoner will swear to do our bidding," says Patupo, as they both go to him.

"Adrian Moreton," Patupo begins, "things have happened which lead us to offer you your life upon certain conditions. If you will——"

"Spare yourself the trouble to name them; for I have heard all you have just said, and will swear to all you ask!" replies the prisoner, with such a thrill as comes to those only who are born again from the womb of the grave,

"Unbind him, Matuku! Now kneel and repeat what I

say. Kiss the cross of this dagger, and hold aloft your right hand. I, Adrian Canova Moreton——"

"*I, Adrian Canova Moreton,*"—repeats the prisoner.

"Do solemnly swear before God and my captors——"

"*Do solemnly swear before God and my captors——*"

"That I will immediately leave New Zealand forever,——"

The prisoner repeats each sentence of the oath propounded by his captors word for word.

"And that I will never set foot again—in the United States of America!"

"I swear, before God and my captors, that I will change my name——"

"And that Adrian Moreton shall henceforth be dead——"

"Dead to his family; to his friends; and to all the world——!"

"That I will write and sign whatever Matuku may dictate;"

"And that I will do nothing which may lead your secret society to suspect that I still live."

"So help me God!"

"And if I break any single one of these pledges——"

"I pray God that my mother and my sister——"

"May be eaten alive by my captors,——"

"And that my own eyes may be swallowed warm, as were those of Te Tihi;"

"And my living body blown from a carronade, as was that of Tiki Whenua!"

"And may my spirit be hurled into the bottomless crater of Tarawera,——"

"To sink to the bowels of its lowest hell!—Amen!"

And the prisoner repeats:

"*To sink to the bowels of its lowest hell!—Amen!*"

"Now rise and follow Matuku. You have nothing to

fear so long as you keep your oath. If you violate it, you know what will happen to your mother, your sister and yourself! Is your torch ready?" continues Patupo, as he turns to Matuku.

"It is ready," laconically replies the other.

"Into the cave, then!—you know its secrets! See Mr. Moreton in safety to its farthest entrance, and there leave him to pursue his way alone. The rest of us will take the shorter, right-hand passage, after barricading the mouth of the cave," says Patupo.

Matuku and his charge hurry into the cavernous opening, and their torch is soon lost to view in the cave's long, tortuous corridors.

Patupo throws an armful of dry grass upon the fire in the hangi, and then looks down the flume toward its entrance. His practised eye detects a slowly moving line of black against the deep grey of the granite shadows.

"Quick, my men!" he shouts as he springs into the cave, followed by his accomplices.

The line of black breaks into spots which are seen rushing toward the mouth of the cave.

"Up with the logs!" cries Patupo. "Good, now we're off!"

Tomo and Maitland are the first to reach the barricade, which they vainly try to dislodge.

"It is of no use, Tomo," says Maitland at length. "It will yield only to fire, and by the time we had burned it down our quarry would be miles hence. We can do nothing further to-night, and may as well bivouac here by the fire. We have prevented the feast, and saved Mr. Moreton for the moment, at all events. I saw him enter the cave with a man who carried a torch."

The men add fuel to the fire, and lie down by it to rest. They have all had a long, hard day, and are soon fast

asleep. No watch is kept; for New Zealand has no animals—other than human—which man need fear.

. . . . .

It was broad daylight when Maitland awoke to see Tomo standing over him with two slips of paper in his hand.

He passed the sheets to Maitland saying:

"They were pinned to my sleeve when I awoke. I have no idea how they came there;—perhaps by the same hand that left the note which I found in my boot yesterday morning."

George unfolded the first, and read as follows:

"To Tomo: My life has been spared upon condition that I can make the world believe Adrian Moreton dead, and that I leave New Zealand and never enter the United States. If I fail, my fate, and that of my mother and sister is sealed. I am permitted to write this to you, but my family must think me dead. Please have the enclosed published as my last words, and guard my secret as you would my life,—for it *is* my life, and that of my dear mother and sister as well. A dreadful secret society, organised for vengeance and called *Te Toke* will strike me and mine wherever we are, if their mandate is disobeyed. Be careful, therefore, O Tomo! Good-bye, forever, and God bless you!

"Adrian C. Moreton."

Maitland was too amazed to speak, and after a moment Tomo said:

"I have thought it best to disobey the letter of my master's request by showing this to you, for fear that otherwise you might succeed in proving him alive, and so unwittingly do him an incalculable harm. Please read the other note."

Maitland complied. It ran as follows:

"To whomsoever it may concern: My only brother has just been murdered. My financial ventures are in a bad way. The only woman who could have made me happy another has taken. I

am perfectly sane. Life is simply not worth the living, that is all, and I have decided to end it. Break the news gently to my mother and sister. In inflicting this upon them I choose by far the lesser of two great evils. Farewell to all my loved ones! Do not search for my body, for ere this is read it will be beneath a thousand fathoms of water, where I shall have taken precautions to see that it remains. We are an ill-starred family. All hope of continuing our line dies with me, and it is well.

"ADRIAN CANOVA MORETON."

A long silence followed Maitland's perusal of this note. It was finally broken by Tomo's single word of interrogation:

"Well?"

"I should give this last communication to the authorities," George replied. "We have, of course, to consider whether or not Mr. Moreton wrote these notes under compulsion. Personally, I do not think he did, and at all events, there seems to be nothing for us to do but to follow their instructions,—terrible though they are."

"And you will keep his secret?" asked Tomo.

For a short space Maitland remained silent.

"I leave for America as soon as I can get away," he at length replied, and then continued, in an awe-stricken voice:

"I lock this dreadful secret in my breast, and you shall hold the key. Neither here, nor there, will I, without your permission, ever lisp so much as a syllable to indicate that Adrian Moreton still lives!" and he extended his hand as a ratification of his pledge.

The Maori seized it eagerly. The two men looked into the depths of each other's eyes and spoke no word.

EPISODE SIXTH

The Mysterious Cryptogram

CHAPTER I

A witty Frenchman has said, that ever since the advent of the first man who had brains enough to know he was born in one place, instead of another, we have heard much about *patriotism*. A famous Englishman has called patriotism the last refuge of the coward. If, for love of our own country and its people, we will read love of the whole world and of the human race, then shall we rise above the petty, insignificant accident of latitude and longitude, and attain to a conception of that wider, deeper, grander patriotism, of which even the philosopher need not be ashamed,—or any man be forced to catalogue among his limitations and his littlenesses. Is a man my brother because of what is under his boot, or because of what is in his head? The real thinker has but one country—the world; but one nation—humanity; but one religion—truth.

THE reception which George Maitland's friends tendered him upon his return from New Zealand was one of which a king might well have been proud.

Simply to say that he was gratified would be to leave most of the fact unsaid. He was, in sooth, deeply touched at this evidence of esteem. The little party manifested the keenest interest in his enthusiastic descriptions of the social conditions of this antipodal land, from which he had just returned; but seemed quite at a loss to understand him, when he told them that there was no political corruption in New Zealand. When the truth was finally borne in upon them, they felt like giving three cheers and a tiger for this far-away—alas! so far away!—perfection; but desisted, being New Yorkers, at thought of the *tiger*.

Tomo, who when it came to parting with Maitland at Auckland, had made an eleventh-hour decision not to do it, was a source of unflagging interest to all present.

The next morning Tomo received a marked copy of *The Napier Daily News*, which had been forwarded to him from New Zealand.

A single glance at the passage indicated caused him to go at once to Maitland.

"This will interest you, I am sure," he said to Maitland. "I received it in this morning's mail."

George followed the direction of Tomo's finger, and saw the following in the column of personals:

"ADRIAN CANOVA MORETON.
Te Toke has learned of your father's innocence and releases you, therefore, from any and all pledges exacted of you. New Zealand and all foreign papers please copy."

"Well, Tomo, what do you say?"

"It has the Sign of the Thirteen, you see," replied Tomo. "It is evident that the Society of *Te Toke* has learned its mistake."

"In short, 'The Worm' has turned again, eh?" asked Maitland quizzically. "I wonder if this will come to Mr. Moreton's eyes."

"God grant that it may!" exclaimed Tomo.

"Amen to that! I suppose, Tomo, that you will now

be willing to release me from my promise to keep the fact that Adrian Moreton still lives a secret."

"There is no further need of concealment, now that *Te Toke* publishes it, and has learned the truth," the Maori replied. "I give you back all your pledges."

"What do you say," said George, "to spreading this personal a bit ourselves? *The Herald* circulates abroad as well as here. Why not take this over to them and ask them to print it, while I write an acquaintance in Napier to send me immediately a couple dozen copies?"

"It's a good idea, and I'll go at once," replied Tomo briefly. "Who knows! we may be the means of bringing it to Mr. Moreton's attention," and he left the room.

An hour later, having mailed his New Zealand letter, Maitland was seated in Dr. Willard's office, enjoying a renewal of that familiarity which had been interrupted for so many weeks.

"Doc, it seems ages, doesn't it, since we've had a real good pow-wow?" said George. "I've so much to tell you that I don't know where to begin. 'We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see.' What answer have you to the various scientific problems I propounded? I grant I didn't explain them very clearly, but I assure you the exposition was as clear as my reasoning. I didn't see them any too vividly myself, Doc. You see, as you approach ultimates, perception gets more and more hazy and ill-defined, and if you are able vaguely to touch a great fundamental principle with your finger-tips, you're doing well."

"That's just the way we doctors feel in many a diagnosis, only you'll never give us credit for it," laughed his companion.

"Credit! You're the first doctor I ever knew who

wanted credit for his work. All the others I ever saw were after cash," was the jocose rejoinder.

"There you are again! When I pass my hand over my self-respect," said the doctor, "I find it all lumps, where you've clubbed it;——"

"—But you *do find it*?—Ah! that, in itself, is a great deal!" interrupted his companion.

"Well, I feel something there, anyway;—maybe it's my vanity," Willard rejoined, and then continued more soberly: "Joking aside, George, aren't we a queer profession? Now here am I a-pouring drugs down Tom Jones's throat for heart-failure, when the real seat of his disease is in Congress. I am giving John Smith sedatives for his brain fever, when I ought to be putting a cold compress on the attorney-general's 'gozzle.' I'm a-doctoring Bill Jenkins for a broken constitution, when I ought to be fixing up the President for the same complaint. I'm giving Dick Donovan cathartics, when I know I ought to be putting the Supreme Court to its purgation, as Hamlet would say; and I'm dosing a dozen women for 'nerves,' when I know perfectly well that it's the nerve of a coal baron that's the sole cause of their malady. I tell you, George, perfectly well persons are getting as rare in this country as white blackbirds, and it's mainly due to social conditions."

"And the mystery of it all is," replied Maitland, "that intelligent people can't be made to see that they create about themselves a psychic atmosphere more real and farther reaching than the sea of air they constantly breathe. How beautiful are Nature's laws! See how each abuse breeds its own antitoxin, though the pity of it is that it makes so large a part of its fibre from the flesh of the innocent!"

"Play that with variations, George; I don't get it," said Willard.

"Why, take the trust magnates, as examples," continued his companion. "They rob and ruin and kill. The paths they travel are like the swaths of the locust, the wake of the army-worm, or the trail of desolation left by a cyclone. Their dishonesty and greed produce social conditions which furrow the brow of Care, and give the anxious, timid pulse of dread to the great heart of Labour. The poor victims suffer, as God alone knows! and in their agony their tears and their blood foul the psychic sea in which they swim side by side with their tormentors. Then Nemesis begins to write legibly! The oil magnate is unable to keep food upon his stomach, my Lady Greed has nervous prostration, and the new-born babe has fits! Social pirates sow broadcast the seeds of psychic leprosy, and never dream that they themselves, together with their nearest and dearest, garner in the ripe infection.—Now, in New Zealand—catch hold of my coat-tails, Doc, before I'm translated!—If I get to soaring on New Zealand, I'll not get back to earth all day."

"'Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip'!" ejaculated the doctor in his most tragic gurgle. "Tell me whose fingers marked James Moreton's throat, or I let thee sail off into the deep empyrean, till its white fire scorch thee, yea, so help me, John Jacob Astorhouse!" and he did in pantomime the curse-scene of "Richelieu."

"Well, what do you think?" asked Maitland.

"You know very well what I think; I am all but certain the marks were made by the victim's wife."

"What! Mrs. Moreton! 'You surely do not propose to waste your time suspecting that queenly woman'!" laughed Maitland.

"Thank you! I recognise the quotation."

"Guess again!"

"I guess Mrs. Moreton, I tell you."

"You're like the youngster who, when asked what two things he'd wish for, if he knew his wishes would be fulfilled, replied, 'First, all the candy I want; and, second, more candy!' Guess again!"

"Mrs. Moreton!"

"Must I tell you in set phrase that the marks were not made by Mrs. Moreton's fingers?"

"You must."

"Well, then, they were not."

"John White?"

"Oh, Doc! you can do better'n that."

"'Charlie Bert,' then."

"'Charlie Bert' already has quite enough against him without adding this. You'll have to count him out."

"Well, Gates, then."

"He's Bertram one remove off, and, so, still farther out of it."

"Clarke, he was within reach. I guess Clarke!"

"Wrong again."

"It's most down to 'thee and me,' George."

"Never us, good doctor, for that were for the salt of the earth to lose its savour. Try again; there are less than a billion and a half people in the world. You must hit it soon!"

"Perry, then!"

"No."

"Belcher!"

"No."

"Bartlett!"

"No."

"Ah, the Jew!—what's his name?"

"Solomon Cohen?"

"Yes!"

"No."

"Wister?"

"No."

"I give it up then, who was it?"

"Elbert Reiss!"

"What! It's impossible!"

"Precisely! If it weren't, it couldn't be a fact in this case. In the Moreton mystery, it's not only the 'unexpected,' but the *impossible* which occurs!"

"But Reiss is not that kind of a man, George."

"Maybe not; but he has that kind of a hand. There is not a shadow of doubt about it. Elbert Reiss is a superb violinist, as you know, and this fact is what betrayed him. The nails of his right hand are permitted to grow to a normal length, while those of his left hand are pared almost to the quick, so that he may use the calloused points of his fingers without the nails interfering, and without danger of cutting the strings. In trimming the nail of his left forefinger, or in some other way, he slit it in the middle. The discontinuous indentation of this nail, even cutting through the skin; the bruised imprint of the callouses on the left hand; and the mark of the nail of every finger of the right hand, were unmistakably visible upon the dead man's throat. Not another person in the room but had nails of equal length upon each hand."

"George, it is awful!"

"All right; we'll change the subject. Just look at this copy of a *Te Toke* personal published in *The Napier Daily News*," he said, passing his friend a paper, "while I talk to you of the Madame for a moment, after which I must be off. Have you been able to come to any conclusion in regard to the two remarkable tests she gave us?"

"No; I can't say that I have. What do you think?"

"I think," Maitland rejoined, "that the Madame is a

remarkable woman; that she probably has quite a history, which will make more profitable reading than most histories; that we had better peruse it; and that if I am to pay my respects to Elbert Reiss to-day, I must get right out of this," saying which he bade his friend good-bye, and immediately departed.

CHAPTER II

It is adversity, not prosperity, which breeds men; as it is the storm, and not the calm, which makes the mariner. Prosperity secretes the toxin of Calamity. From the crest of the financial boom all commercial directions are downward; while from the depths of panic all business lines lead upward. So is it with the slough of despond. When the worst has happened we have gained the wind of Fate, and only Death's dead calm can keep our beleaguered craft from happier waters.

"ELBERT, this sort of thing cannot continue forever."

"No; God be praised!"

The first speaker was Mrs. Hortense Moreton; the second, Mr. Elbert Reiss. They were in the artist's apartments.

"Do you not see that you are losing ground every day?" the lady continued.

"Well, and if so, what then?"

"What then? Why, the end is inevitable, if you keep on in this fashion!" exclaimed the lady.

The man gazed at her for a time, and the hard, glassy look in his eyes gave place to a great tenderness. He arose from his chair and went to her before he spoke.

"The end has already come," he said, gazing down upon her with a wistful look upon his face.

"Tell me what the trouble is; perhaps I can help you!"

"There is no help for me; no help but death."

"If so, tell me your trouble, and I shall see it so."

"The load is mine; its galling surfaces have calloused my soul to endurance. Let it be; I dare not shift it now. The burden soon will be my soul,—my soul the burden!" replied the man hopelessly. "I cannot tell even you."

"Then will I tell you!" said the woman resolutely.

"Let me beg that you will not!" exclaimed the man hastily.

The woman continued as if he had not spoken:

"You are breaking your heart for someone who is breaking her heart for you. You have made a terrible blunder——"

"—God only knows how well I know it!"

"No, no, not that! I mean that there has been a fearful misunderstanding."

"Pardon me; there has been no misunderstanding."

"Will you not suffer me to explain? Elbert! you are doing Miss Sher——"

"—Peace! do not speak her name! I cannot bear it!"

"Oh! but you are doing her such an injustice!"

"Be God her judge, not I!"

"Your conduct is killing her!"

"She will not want *my* pity—yet I am sorry."

"She does not even suspect that I am pleading her cause."

"And would not permit it, if she did."

"When I learned the full truth of this awful misunderstanding,—learned the part my own husband played therein,—I simply could not hold my peace. I came directly to you, determined that you should at least listen to me, your friend."

"And even you I must refuse. Believe me, Marie, I am not ungrateful; but I cannot listen to any explanation. The incident is closed! I have given Hope as decent a burial as I could command, and must insist that the grave be not tampered with."

"Be that as it may! I still must explain the dreadful error——"

"—Marie! I saw with my own eyes; heard with my own ears. The dove turned snake even as I held it, and

struck its poisonous fangs into my very soul! Think you, such a story must be told again? Repeat a tragedy however oft you may, you will not make a comedy of it. Let me beg you, Marie, to change the subject, and never again to allude to it in my presence. Let the dead keep their secrets!"

"Elbert, I have promised myself that you should hear the truth, and I shall keep that pledge. This is no time for squeamishness, Elbert!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Think what you will, only listen! When last you called on Marion——"

But the man had rushed out of the room. The woman stood irresolutely for a moment, then dropped helplessly into a chair. There was a hurried step in the hall, and Eric entered.

He stopped short as he saw her, and his face flushed. The woman with the native quickness of her sex saw and understood.

"What has happened to Elbert?" exclaimed Eric. "He rushed by me on the stairway, and paid no heed to my question."

"I tried to force upon him an explanation of his injustice to Miss Sherwood. He refused to listen."

"I am glad it is no worse."

"Worse? Is it not about as bad as it can be?" rejoined his companion. "Here are two beings eating out their hearts for each other with this awful shadow between them. I am at my wits' end. Will you not help me, E—Mr. Montrose?"

Eric saw the wave of crimson which overspread the beautiful face, and noted, too, the sudden formality of the address, and his heart felt as if a hot fluid had suddenly been dashed over it.

"Will you not help me?" repeated the woman, with a tender supplication which made her look like an angel.

It was too much for the young inventor. He took a quick step toward her, then paused.

"Mrs. Moreton—Marie—I—it is my—my dearest wish that I may always——"

But the door opened, and Maitland's entrance cut short the sentence.

One glance told him more than either the man or the woman would have confessed in a twelve-month, but neither Eric nor Mrs. Moreton so much as suspected it.

"I came to see Mr. Reiss," he said, after they had exchanged greetings, "and am delighted to find that he has left such good substitutes. I heard that he was a bit under the weather, and thought I'd just take a look at him to see if he were overworking."

"Ah! Mr. Maitland," said Mrs. Moreton impulsively; "it is far more serious than that. He is breaking his heart, and he will not let anyone help him. It was of that we were speaking when you entered."

"Indeed! Perhaps I can be of some service in the matter."

"Oh, if you will only help us, I feel sure something can be done! It is all such a dreadful misunderstanding," and she narrated the whole sad incident with painstaking detail. "We are at our wits' end. I tried to explain it all to him, but he would not listen. You are so resourceful, Mr. Maitland, can you not think of some way out of this dilemma?"

"Really, Mrs. Moreton, I think I can, if Eric will forego the pleasure of your company for a short time, and you will come away with me before Elbert returns and sees us together. Do not tell him that I have been here, Eric," he said at the door. "I shall be back soon."

. . . . .

Half an hour after the departure of Maitland and Mrs.

Moreton, Reiss returned. Eric immediately left the room for fear Elbert might ask him if anyone had called during his absence.

For a long time the artist sat and gazed blankly into space. He had done little or no work since that fatal June thirteenth. He took up his violin and played a few sobbing chords, only to put it down again as Maitland entered.

"I'm sorry to see you looking so fagged out, Elbert," he said. "What is the matter; working too hard?"

"No, indeed! I just feel a bit seedy, that's all. It's not too much work, though it may be too much loafing."

"I think I shall have to take you in hand. May I prescribe?"

"Yes, fire away," Reiss replied, with a faint smile. "You can't mix up any medicine too nauseating for me, Mr. Chemist; for I can take anything I can get through my collar."

"Good for you! Now, according to my diagnosis of your complaint, the trouble is with your *will*—you've got too much of it where it oughtn't to be."

"Too much will!" ejaculated Reiss. "Why, bless you, man, I haven't any! I hesitated fully a minute in dressing this morning because I couldn't determine whether to put on my cuffs or my collar first. It took me five minutes to decide between my tan and my black shoes, and I came precious near compromising on one of each. *Will*, indeed! I have far less than my wont."

"Oh, that's awful! You'll surely have to take something for that!—I haven't time now to explain, for I must be off. Will you be at my house to-morrow at two o'clock, prepared to be put through 'a course of sprouts'?"

"I'll be there with my expectation set at danger," replied the artist.

"All right, then. Good-bye! To-morrow at two! You might scratch off a fitting epitaph in the interim," said Maitland, with a laugh.

. . . . .

At two o'clock the men were in George's den, a good-sized room divided in the middle by curtains, now looped back, but which could, when Maitland desired it, be allowed to fall so as to cut off the rear end of the apartment.

This den was directly at the head of the front stairs, and was only separated from the hallway by a portiere. There was no door.

"Are you ready for the question?" said George to his guest.

"Yes; drive on," Reiss replied.

"All right, then, strip to the waist," Maitland rejoined, throwing off his dressing-gown and disclosing the fact that he had already followed his own mandate.

The artist did as requested, placing his clothing upon a chair.

"Now then," said Maitland as he took up his position in front of Reiss, "do just as I do and be careful of details. Weight on both feet; heels together; chest up; chin in. Take the weight off the hips. Raise the arms; hands open, palms forward. Now slowly bend——"

But his sentence was cut short by the voice of his wife in the hall below.

"Walk right into his den at the head of the stairs, Mrs. Moreton, and I'll send him to you," said the voice.

"Shut the door, George! she's coming in here!" shrieked the artist.

"There isn't any door to shut!" exclaimed his companion, seizing his dressing-gown and almost jumping into it, while Reiss tried to roll himself up in one of the

central curtains, without the somewhat necessary preliminary of unfastening it.

"Here, quick! get in back, and I'll draw the curtains in front of you, till I can get rid of her!"

The disappearance was barely accomplished when Mrs. Moreton entered the room followed by Marion Sherwood.

"Oh! so you are already here, Mr. Maitland!" exclaimed the queenly Mrs. Moreton, in a tone which would have passed anywhere for a genuine evidence of surprise. "Your wife told us to walk right in and said she would send you up. You will pardon me for not knocking?"

"If you and Miss Sherwood will excuse this somewhat negligee attire, we'll call it square," was Maitland's laughing rejoinder. "You see, ladies, the fact of the matter is, I was taking a bit of physical drill when I heard Mrs. Moreton's voice, and——"

"—Ladies who enter gentlemen's apartments so unceremoniously as we did have no right to be at all exacting, Mr. Maitland," said Miss Sherwood, with a faint attempt at a smile.

"I told Miss Sherwood of the difficulties you were experiencing, Mr. Maitland, in finding any clues to Mr. Moreton's murderers, and explained to her how essential it was that you should be able to account for every possible moment of his time on that fatal June thirteenth. I at length persuaded her, in the interests of justice, to open once more a subject most painful to her, and to tell you every particular pertaining to the only visit she ever received from Mr. Moreton,—the visit he made her on the very day of his murder."

"It was not far from nine o'clock on the morning of June thirteenth that Mr. Moreton called upon me," Miss Sherwood explained. "Lenore admitted him. He said he had called upon a matter too urgent to brook delay:

that his regard for me had forced him to be the bearer of disagreeable tidings, and handed me these two newspaper clippings. These atrocious calumnies affected me deeply, and something—you will pardon me, Marie,—something told me Mr. Moreton expected to profit by them. I told him they were malicious, and that he might have saved himself the trouble of putting them before me since they would surely come to Mr. Reiss's attention, and that he would bring them at once to me. Mr. Moreton denied this vehemently,—and said he'd stake a fortune that Mr. Reiss would never show me the notices. Even while he voiced his denial, Mr. Reiss was announced. A feeling of triumph took possession of me, and I said: 'You see, I am right!' 'Not yet, he has not yet told you of the notices!' he retorted. 'But he will! you shall see!' I exclaimed. He shrugged his shoulders and replied with a sneer: 'Ah, doubtless:—after he has seen me and knows I have already done so.' 'Oh! but he shall not see you! Here! step into the alcove and draw the curtains. There! now we shall see!' I cried, in an evil moment. 'And you will not tell him?' he asked, after I had concealed him. 'No; you will hear all that passes, and will see how you have wronged Mr. Reiss,' I replied."

"And Lenore, where was she in the meantime?" Maitland asked.

"She was standing just inside the doorway, waiting for me to tell her to admit Mr. Reiss," replied Miss Sherwood.

"And when Mr. Reiss finally entered, what occurred?" Maitland questioned.

"He showed me the clippings," she replied, "and seemed deeply affected by them—so deeply, in fact, that I tried to make light of them. I told him I was sure they were dictated by malice, and that we ought not

to pay any attention to them. He said he should be forced to act as if the lies were true. I—there—there—are some things so inexpressibly dear that it seems like sacrilege to confide them to another; yet I know that it is necessary." A bright crimson flood poured itself over her face and neck as she continued in a low voice, with her eyes fixed upon the floor: "Mr. Reiss told me he loved me, and I—I confessed my love for him. I had long since forgotten that we were not alone—forgotten everything but the man who was pouring out his heart to me. For a moment he did not seem to understand the purport of my confession. Then a great light came into his face, and he caught me to him. As our lips met Mr. Moreton sprang from behind the curtains with a loud, mocking laugh. I—Mr. Reiss——" But she could not proceed. Great sobs choked her utterance and shook her delicate frame as with an ague.

She continued with difficulty:

"With an exclamation of disgust and loathing Mr. Reiss threw me from him, and—and—I knew no more till long after—both—he—and—and Mr. Moreton were gone."

"And you do not know what passed between the two men?" asked Maitland excitedly.

"Yes; Lenore told me when I regained consciousness. She had heard me when I fell, and immediately afterward she felt the shock of Mr. Moreton's fall. When she reached the room Mr. Reiss had his knee upon the prostrate man's chest, and both hands clutched about his throat."

"*How say you? Both hands about his throat!—you are sure of this?*" cried Maitland, springing to his feet and exhibiting a degree of excitement which neither the women nor the man weeping behind the curtain could comprehend.

"I am sure Mr. Reiss had both hands about Mr. Moreton's throat, for it was some time before Lenore could get him to remove them, and permit the fallen man to arise. As he did so he said to him: 'I'll keep my oath on a more fitting occasion!' A minute later both men had left the house. That—that is all, Mr. Maitland."

"Miss Sherwood, I scarcely know how to thank you!" said Maitland, extending his hand impulsively toward her. "Some day I will tell you what a load you have lifted from my heart, and how much pain and annoyance, if not actual danger, you have saved an innocent man. By the elimination of one factor which has troubled me sorely, you have greatly assisted me in the conduct of this difficult case. I feel like a great brute to have caused you so much pain," he said at length, "yet I believe, when you know fully my motives, you will as fully forgive me."

"I wish to see Mr. Maitland a few minutes alone, dear," said Mrs. Moreton gently. "Will you mind if we leave you by yourself for just a little while?"

"Not in the least, dear."

A minute after the departure of her two friends Marion heard a sound at the rear of the room. She turned toward the curtains.

"Elbert!" she cried, springing to her feet and clutching at her heart. She staggered toward him—stopped, groped for a chair to support her, missed it, and would have fallen headlong had not the man caught her in his arms.

"Darling, can you forgive me? Look up and say you forgive me!" and he kissed her passionately.

A man and a woman in the hall heard the question, and heard the kiss, at which they shook hands jubilantly, and then stole like culprits softly down the back stairs.

CHAPTER III

Death is but the thought—*nevermore*—written in fact. Its real essence is inaccessibility. When, therefore, some dear craft sinks, as we believe, forever below our horizon, it is almost as if it went down, with all our tender hopes and memories on board, in the fathomless depths of Life's sea. Should a fickle or relenting Fate ever permit it to sail back up the steep incline of night, and unexpectedly to reappear upon the golden, shimmering rim of our day, its advent will be a veritable new birth, for the Waters of Despair will have given us back our dead.

On the following Monday Tomo waited upon Maitland. George saw at once that something quite out of the ordinary had transpired, for the old man's face actually beamed with delight.

"It's plain to see that you have had pleasant news, Tomo," said Maitland. "What is it?"

"Oh, sir, it must have been what *Te Toke* put in the papers that did it!"

"Did it? did what, Tomo?" Maitland asked.

"Told my master he was safe, and brought him back to me!" he cried.

"Brought him back to you!" exclaimed George. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that Adrian Moreton is in America!—in New York! Mr. Montrose has talked with him!—it was he who told me about it. I am going to see him this afternoon. Won't he be surprised, though, to find me here? Mr. Montrose has made an appointment for me, without hinting who it is who is going to call. I am just 'a gentleman interested in the Moreton family.' How he will stare at me!" and Tomo, unable longer to control his feelings, paced up and down the room gesticulating in dumb show.

"We are to be congratulated, Tomo, for things are surely coming our way," said George, extending his hand to the Maori.

The old man seized it and pressed it with a will.

. . . . .

In one of the semi-dark, inside rooms of the Astor House,—that memory of by-gone greatness,—sits a bearded and tattooed man. His dark skin,—tanned by exposure to sun and weather-beaten by a long sea-voyage,—bespeaks him a foreigner to the casual glance, an impression which is firmly driven home when the observer, becoming accustomed to the half-light of the room, detects the delicate, blue tracery of the man's somewhat elaborate facial tattoo. Yet despite this the man is a full-blooded American, as is clearly evinced by the fact that he is at this very moment affixing the signature,—"Adrian Canova Moreton"—to a little note addressed "Henry Forsythe Carew, M. D."—a note informing the physician of his arrival from New Zealand to take charge of James's affairs, and asking for an early interview.

There is a knock at the door, and the bell-boy enters with a card.

An involuntary exclamation escapes the man as he glances at it.

"Tomo! Tomo here!" Then, turning to the boy, "Show the gentleman right up."

A minute later Tomo enters the room.

"Ah! Tomo, this is an unexpected pleasure! I would have staked my life that you were on the other side of the earth. Here! sit here in the light where I may look at you. I have been trying to reconcile myself, Tomo, to the thought that I should never look upon your face again. I've been very ill since we parted—some throat ailment—and there was a time when I despaired of ever

regaining my voice. It's coming back slowly, however, though it's still a long way from what it was. God only knows what I've been through—since we—but here I am a-rambling on like a town-gossip, without giving you a chance to get a word in edgewise. Come, tell me of yourself," and he seats himself opposite his guest.

"First tell *me* if it was not *Te Toke's* notice in *The Napier Daily News* which brought you here?"

"Yes," replies his host; "that, and Dr. Carew's letter informing me of the urgent need of my presence here to look after poor James's interests. I am not sure but I should have come here, sooner or later, even if I had not been released from my oath by *Te Toke's* advertisement. A pledge exacted under duress is hardly as sacred, you know, as one's duty to a dead brother. I saw the notice just as I was leaving for Japan. It was by the merest accident that I noticed it. Oh! I tremble when I think how near I came to being doomed to eternal exile from all that I hold dear!"

"What is that upon your face?" asks Tomo, leaning forward the better to peer into the shadow in which his companion sits. "Either my old eyes deceive me in this uncertain light, or else your face is tattooed!"

"Yes, Tomo," replies Mr. Moreton, with a sad smile, accompanied by a little reminiscent shudder. "Your artistic tribesmen have given me a beautiful *moko*."

"Ah, I was afraid it would be so!" exclaims the old man. "But how did it happen that they did not kill you when we surprised them? Did they not have time?"

"They feared you had discovered their identity, and would bring them to justice if they murdered me. They had the *hangi* ready, and the stones—the stones red-hot! The—the weapon was at my breast, and

they——" But he pauses, as if unable to proceed, and Tomo, alarmed at the expression of acute pain which distorts his countenance, springs from his seat to offer him assistance.

The sufferer motions him back with a feeble gesture.

"My fearful experiences have all but unseated my—my reason. For several days I was a raving maniac; but—but I'm better now, only—only the fit threatens to seize me again whenever my—my mind dwells upon the horrors of the past. Something—something is wrong with—with my head," and he presses both hands against his temples, and again the agonised expression returns.

"Forgive me for making you suffer!" exclaims Tomo, beseechingly. "Never again will I refer to the past in your presence," and he stands irresolutely, not knowing whether or not he should summon aid.

"You—you are not at fault, Tomo. I—I must avoid all—all thoughts of—of New Zealand—till I am strong again. Would you please ask them at the office to—to get this prescription filled, and send it to me at once?" and he passes the old man a little slip of paper.

"Can I not——" But Tomo does not finish his sentence, for he thinks, with something akin to a pang, that his own presence is one of the strongest reminders which the stricken man can possibly have of his harrowing experiences.

"I will see," Tomo continues, "that it is sent to you right away. Good-bye! Is there nothing else I can do?"

"Nothing, thank you, Tomo. Good-bye!" and the sufferer feebly extends his hand to the old man.

. . . . . .

"*Imprimis*," said Maitland to Willard, "Mr. Adrian Canova Moreton is in New York. Tomo told me so

this morning and Eric Montrose this afternoon. He has already called on Eric at the laboratory of The International Wireless, over in Jersey."

"Well! well! what next?" ejaculated the doctor. "He must have seen that wormy personal—I mean that personal of *The Worm*, which you showed me, or else he has had the courage to defy *Te Toke*."

"We shall know all about it in good time, for Tomo has gone to see him," Maitland replied. "So much for that. Now, then, for number two! You will be glad to know that that little matter of the finger-prints on the murdered man's throat has been satisfactorily cleared up!"

"Aha! and I was right! They weren't made by Reiss, after all! Come now, admit it."

"Oh, no! I was right and you were wrong," laughingly rejoined Maitland.

"How do you make that out?" asked the doctor.

"Because the marks on the murdered man's neck were made by eight fingers and two thumbs, all of which were the personal property of one Elbert Reiss, an artist," George replied.

"What! Do you mean that they really were Reiss's fingers, after all?"

"They really were. But they did not register themselves upon Mr. Moreton's throat at just the time we thought. You see, it was this way. Messrs. Reiss and Moreton had had a quarrel that very morning, and Reiss had choked Moreton almost into insensibility. You know what strength the fellow has. Well, almost every nail of his right hand, as well as that of the forefinger of his left hand, cut the skin of Moreton's throat, while the callouses on his left hand abrased and discoloured his victim's neck. Had the marks on the dead man's throat been well lighted,—and had I had an op-

portunity to view them close at hand and at my leisure, instead of being obliged to learn what I could in a half-lighted, momentary glance from far too great a distance for ideal observation,—I should, most likely, have noticed that the marks were more than a few seconds old; unless, indeed, my desire to impress their every peculiarity of shape into my very soul had blinded me to all other details. As it was, I think my oversight was but natural.—Now here's another bit of news for you. Mrs. Moreton and I have succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between Miss Sherwood and the artist. And still they come! Now prepare for a surprise, Ned. I have reason to believe that 'The Eichberg' is Madame Duval's daughter, despite the fact that I am, as yet, utterly unable to tell how she came by the name 'Eichberg.' Now, Rachel has for several years been earnestly searching for a rich son-in-law for her mother, and apparently she has recently decided to accept our friend Bertram, though it is common knowledge that she was only toying with him prior to his employer's murder. I leave you to conjecture why she has had this sudden change of heart."

"You think it's Charlie's ill-gotten plunder that has influenced her, I see," the doctor remarked.

"I do, for a fact," Maitland replied. "The Madame used to live in Washington. In fact, she enjoyed the pleasant distinction in her prime of being the belle of Hooker Section. Hooker Section, you know, Doc, is a sort of nepenthe for Congressional nostalgia; a kind of Lethean wharf from which senators throw their home-longings, as if they were the soul-galling burdens of crime, into the false waters below.

"There the Madame met one Carl Mayne, an attaché of the German embassy. The two were attracted to each other and had what I believe they call on the

Continent a 'student's wedding,' with, in this case, a slight variation to suit local conditions,—said variation being that no one but the contracting parties had the slightest inkling of the affair. In about a year Rachel was born, and then began the tribulation of our virtuous sex. There now! Don't you think I'm newsy?"

"Newsy? You're a whole sewing-circle let loose on a bunch of scandals!" Willard replied.

"'And still there's more to follow!'" Maitland continued. "I've had another inning over at 163 Lombrose Street. The room in which the murder was committed has been under seal ever since the tragedy,—except upon a few occasions when it has been entered in my presence. I found everything absolutely intact, just as we left it."

"Did you learn anything new, George?" his companion asked with manifest interest.

"Did I learn anything new! Doc, if 'Charlie Bert' knew what I've discovered, he'd be back in the asylum before night!" exclaimed Maitland.

"'Charlie Bert'!" cried the doctor. "For heaven's sake, man, you don't still think——"

"—Think, I don't *have* to think, Doc! All I have to do is to *look!* Why, bless you! Bertram and Gates,—but there, we'll not dogmatise. Just glance a moment at Mr. Bertram's case. You'll admit that he and Gates had opportunity; or, since the impossible was achieved, let us say they had all the opportunity that anyone had! And I think you'll also agree, now that we know White is out of it, that no one had a better motive. Bertram had stolen thousands of dollars of his employer's money, and immediate detection confronted him. He himself acknowledges that Moreton had asked him for a statement of account. Very well. Now add to all this that

his employer had just placed a fine 'haul' in his safe,—a fact of which he admits he was fully aware,—and that it was a case of then or never with Charles, and see what you make of it, Doc."

"But the whole thing, George, shows the profoundest premeditation," Willard suggested.

"Granted: but what of it?" Maitland rejoined.

"We don't know—at least *I* don't—*just* how the murder was accomplished," continued the doctor, "but we know enough to know that the method employed was unparalleled, fantastic, outré and bizarre in the extreme."

"We'll play it was, anyway, for the sake of the argument," the other replied.

"Now, it isn't quite clear to me," continued the doctor, "how a man can, at one and the same time, be clever enough to plan a crime as intricate as a Steinitz chess problem, and yet, with—as I assume—countless other means at his disposal, foolish enough gratuitously to select a *dénouement* which only a miracle could bring to a successful termination."

"His insane neurosis bridges that gap to perfection," Maitland replied.

"But you cannot hold that his act was the result of insane frenzy, when you have given him both motive and an accomplice," said Willard.

"For heaven's sake, Ned, don't make me think you are as ignorant as some of the judges in our criminal courts!" exclaimed his companion. "You ought to know, by this time, that the presence of motive does not preclude the presence of insanity, and you ought also to know that only a relatively small number of insane acts are characterised by frenzy or fury. That idea is an heirloom from the old theory of satanic obsession. Now, in 'Charlie Bert's' insane tendencies we have the

prettiest conceivable explanation for much that could not possibly be accounted for upon any other assumption; for example: the marvellous skill, the almost unbelievable cunning, which he has, say, exhibited in some instances, and the dare-devil, easily avoidable risk which he has almost invited in others. The case is full of this sort of thing, as you will see by and by. It's as if a chess-master in the formulation of a scheme of dazzling brilliancy invited a check-mate, every now and then, from sheer dare-deviltry.—You know about what kind of a game of chess I play?"

"Yes; I know it's quite good enough for me," replied Willard.

"Well, Charlie and Mr. Moreton played together a good deal," George continued, "and Charlie got so he could give his employer a good rub. I wanted to see what I could learn from Charlie's game, so I challenged him to a little bout yesterday. I was as a wax in his hands, but I achieved my purpose. Thrice in the first game I offered him an easy victory, and he passed it by in favour of a brilliant *coup* full of possible pitfalls for himself. Again and again did he offer me an entirely gratuitous advantage, and, as I stupidly rejected one after the other, he made them more and more glaringly apparent, till at length I had to accept one of them in order not to arouse suspicion. Well, sir! he took that as my measure, and just smothered me with sweets, hung, as he supposed, just beyond my intellectual fingertips. Oh! I received quite a successful defeat, I assure you, at Charlie's hands," and Maitland glanced anxiously at his watch.

"Don't worry the time, George," said Willard. "You've yet to tell me, you know, what you learned over at 163."

"Well, that's not next in order, and I do have such an

orderly mind, Doc!" replied Maitland. "I have first to tell you why I went there again. When the White clue broke, and I got back here in New York, I went over the whole list of possibilities from A to Z. There were just three men whose entire time was not accounted for, on that fatal afternoon, from the moment when the lights went out to the very instant when we discovered that the body had been removed from the room. These men were Dr. Edward Willard, Charles Bertram and Henry Gates.

"Holding my suspicions of you, Doc, in abeyance, there were only Bertram and Gates left, and I determined to see what I could learn of interest about these gentlemen. Well, I picked up quite a bit about Charlie, and you remember what you wrote me about him when I was in New Zealand. Pretty soon I began to perceive that all roads led to Charlie. So far, every fact I have unearthed slips into place with the irrefutable conviction of an indenture. I haven't time to begin to describe to you half the evidential rays already discovered which pass through Mr. Charles Bertram as a focal point."

"You must have done a hustle, George—unless you learned all these from Sheehan and Burke," said the doctor, with a sidelong glance at his companion.

"Doc, you're a 'wiz'! Sheehan and Burke, indeed! You've a fine sense of humour. The last I heard of Sheehan and Burke they were still trying to explain how Moreton's safe was electrically melted open. They had been obliged to abandon the theory that the wires were tapped outside, because when they condescended to follow my humble suggestion they found every inch of insulation perfectly intact. So now they are trying to figure out how twenty pounds of iron and steel could have been melted out of a safe by the current which

lights the office—104 volts alternating, fused at the meter with a 20-ampere fuse—*which was not blown!* Sheehan and Burke! Roll the two into one mass and our friend Osborne, of the Darrow case, is a veritable 'Sherlock Holmes' in comparison with the composite lump.—But this isn't telling you what I found at 163."

"No; everytime you get near that subject something seems to explode inside your head, and you go shooting off at a tangent," said Willard.

"Well, I'm a bit addle-pated to-day, anyway. Burning the candle at both ends doesn't agree with me," Maitland rejoined. "Well, when I finally settled on 'Charlie Bert,' the idea came to me like a flash to put myself in his place, making all due allowance for the personal equation, and to see how I, *acting in his environment*, would be likely to plan such a murder. In this way I got some new ideas, and determined to test some of them by a trip to 163."

"Yes, that's the address, my addle-pated friend," laughed the doctor.

"Oh! by the way. I must state in advance that Messrs. Bertram and Gates spent quite a number of evenings over at 163, both while it was in process of renovation and afterward; and that they had much to do with the final finishing and furnishing of the place. On several occasions they stayed there all night.—Where was I?"

"One hundred and sixty-three Lombrose Street, Jersey City, N. J., in the upper story,—with your own upper story badly addled," said Willard.

"Exactly! Sheehan and Burke had lost interest in the place, so at their suggestion I went alone. I locked myself in the room where the murder was committed, and turned on all the lights."

"Thank heaven for that!" exclaimed the doctor, with a profound sigh of relief.

"For what?" asked his companion.

"For the fact that you have gotten there at last, and are under lock and key," answered the doctor.

"Oh! Indeed! Well, I began another complete search of that place, and in the very midst of it, what do you think happened?"

"Some fool unlocked the door and you went out!"

"No, sir; it was the lights that went out!"

"What!"

"Every one of them! I was in pitch darkness, and I was morally certain I felt something, or somebody, close beside me! I don't think I'm a coward, but I've imagination enough to think *structures* when I observe *functions*. I'm ashamed to say that my flesh was like sand-paper."

"But what was it?"

"I don't know, Ned. When I had lighted a match and looked around, I was sure it was all imagination. When the match went *out*, I wasn't so sure. I lighted another. There was nothing unusual to be seen!—Clearly it was merely the suddenness of the thing, coupled with associations of the mysterious tragedy which had been enacted on the very spot where I stood—alone,—in the dark—and locked in. *That* match went out, and in my hurry to get another I dropped all I had on the floor. I stooped to grope for them, and, as God is my judge, Doc! I brought my face right down into the bloodless face of James Moreton's corpse!"

"Impossible!"

"As I live, I saw it! His upturned face was right between my hands! His eyes were open and staring, and his face partly decomposed! I even saw the marks upon his throat! The stench was awful! A gentle,

lambent light, like that which plays in fickle, phosphorescent waves about a putrefying corpse, poured itself in repeated floods over his face and neck. I tried to shriek, but no sound came. I could not move my eyes from the decaying face so close to mine. I trembled in every limb. Then I saw the mouth of the corpse slowly open. I felt its breath, and smelled the awful odour of the charnel-house! The thing tried to speak, and I heard in a faint, far-away whisper, 'Charlie'! 'Charlie'! Then I felt a cold, clammy hand close over each of mine upon the floor, and my strength began to leave me. I knew that in a moment the hinges of my elbows would fold up, and that I should fall headlong into the awful thing beneath me. Suddenly the glassy eyes which held my eyes enmeshed swelled as if they would burst, and the body beneath me *began to rise!* Nearer and nearer it came till the unclean, horrent lips, reeking with festering filth, touched my own! Then the last vestige of strength deserted me—I fell unconscious—and buried my face in the awful, putrid face of the dead!"

CHAPTER IV

The cut coil is hardest to unwind. Its superfluity of ends baffles our choice. So, in the solution of a mystery, too many answers "probal to thinking" serve only to confuse us. In the normal skein, let us but once seize the outside end, and we have but to keep unwinding; success is predetermined and inevitable. The whole difficulty is in finding the end at the beginning. That done, the rest is easy.

"BEFORE I came fully to my senses," continued Maitland, "I began to feel aimlessly about on the floor, in the half-conscious hope, I suppose, of touching some familiar object which would assist me in determining my whereabouts, and in realising what had happened to me. As luck would have it, before I had sufficiently recovered to remember the awful experience which had so unmanned me, my hand fell upon the card of matches I had dropped. Then the horror of it all came back to me, and you may well believe I lost no time in striking a light and looking thoroughly about me. There was not a thing in the least bit suspicious to be seen! I took good care not to drop the matches this time, and I didn't allow my light to go out again either. I made my way quickly to the door and left the room, locking it, of course."

"Then you didn't ascertain who or what extinguished the electric lights?" said Willard.

"I am coming to that," his companion replied. "I knew that the hall lamps, which are on the same meter, had been used to light Eric and his assistants to and from the laboratory, and so concluded that my copper wire had probably been replaced by the usual fuse-wire. Such being the case, I had no doubt the circuit was

again open at the method. Anyway, I assumed this, and went out and procured a yard of fuse-wire and a lantern, after which I returned, fully determined to ascertain what blew that fuse. I had already evolved a theory in my own mind, and was all impatience to test it. You remember how, at the stockholders' meeting, just before the lights went out, Bertram and Gates left their positions near the door and came and stood one on either side of James Moreton, as if to protect him from the assault of the opposing faction? You needn't assign any motive, but please don't forget the *act*, nor the exact positions of the two men,—one on either side of the desk, and James Moreton between them. There's nothing in the whole case more important to remember!"

"Ah, I see! That's the way you account for the victim being stabbed both in the breast and in the back at practically the same time," said the doctor thoughtfully.

"Well, I remembered just where Bertram stood, and I knew pretty nearly my own location when the lights went out on this last occasion. As nearly as I could figure it, our positions were *sensibly coincident!*" said Maitland impressively.

"Even so, what of it?" rejoined Willard. "I don't see what you're driving at, George."

"Well, you will in a minute," Maitland replied. "I took the lantern and carefully examined the linoleum all about the spot under consideration. There was nothing to attract attention at the exact place where I had thought Bertram stood, but a little nearer the centre of the desk there was an ink-blot upon the linoleum about the size of a dime. This would have been within easy reach of Charlie's foot from where he stood. I put my toe edgewise upon the blot and pressed firmly. Instantly

the lights went out! I examined the meter. The fuse was blown! I put in another and repeated the experiment. Same result. Then I turned back the linoleum after boring a little hole through the centre of the ink-blot, to mark its location upon the floor beneath, and made an examination of the flooring. The room, as I had learned on my former examination, was floored with tongued and grooved stock, and it took me quite a while to get up the boards adjacent to the particular one in which I was interested. I had good reason for not wishing to mar this in the least. At last I succeeded in getting it safely up, and if ever there were a slick arrangement, that was it under that board. It was simplicity itself! The two light wires, not more than two inches apart, passed side by side under this board, which board, by the way, ended a few inches beyond the ink-spot. The tongue of this particular strip, as well as that of its neighbour, was neatly whittled away; so that the whole arrangement constituted a wooden spring capable of slight depression, yet looking for all the world the exact counterpart of its fellows. Now, about three inches from the free end of this movable wooden tongue, and upon the under side thereof, was a little transverse rod of metal, so arranged that it crossed the two electric wires at right angles, and was normally just out of contact with them. Just below this bar the insulation was neatly removed from the wires."

"And when the board was pressed down this metallic bar touched the two wires, short-circuited the current and blew the fuse, eh?" said the doctor.

"Precisely! Isn't that slick? The board was so arranged, relative to the desk, that under ordinary circumstances it would be extremely unlikely to be accidentally stepped upon; and even so, it would not be operated unless the foot were placed in a peculiar posi-

tion. One of the chief beauties of the invention is the fact that, even if the lights are accidentally cut off, the secret is not revealed. Nothing whatever has been disclosed. You re-fuse the metal, and the simple little mechanism is just as ready to operate again as it was before."

"George, I congratulate you on your find," and the doctor held out his hand.

"But I haven't told you the cream of it yet," said the other. "Listen: the tongues of those two boards were whittled off with a jackknife."

"Why a knife instead of a chisel?" Willard asked.

"Don't you suppose I can tell the difference between the work of a chisel and a knife?" laughed Maitland. "However, to satisfy you, I will add that the blade of a knife has a cutting edge down to within a quarter-inch, say, of the handle, at which point the front edge abruptly thickens, producing, if you please, a declivitous shoulder on each side of the aforesaid cutting edge. Now in whittling a piece of wood, one almost invariably lets the blade occasionally slip upwardly on the work, so as to gouge a bit with the undermost of these sharp shoulders, thereby leaving evidence which is unmistakable, for no other tool makes a similar record on two surfaces at right angles to each other."

"I shall have to admit it. Go on," said the doctor.

"Well, upon the edges of each of these boards, where they had been whittled, were three minute ribs or tiny tongues extending longitudinally, the result of three minute nicks in the knife-blade. Here is an impression of them upon a piece of paper," and he passed a slip of tissue to the doctor.

"This, of course, merely shows their relative positions," Willard replied, scrutinising the paper closely.

"It shows a little more than that," Maitland returned.

"You will note that they are of three different sizes. Of course, the exact conformation of each is a matter for micro-photography. I shall have an enlarged picture of them in a day or two. You see, I have to do everything myself, for fear Sheehan and Burke may 'smell a mice' and try to get in ahead of me, and that makes me a trifle slow."

"Slow!" ejaculated his companion. "Your recent progress seems to me little short of miraculous."

"That's because the net is drawing in about a definite suspect, or rather definite suspects," George continued. "Now examine this," and he opened a small jackknife with a curiously wrought handle of bone, and passed it to his friend. "Notice the three nicks upon the blade, the largest nearest the handle and the smallest nearest the point of the blade, with the intermediate size in the intermediate position!"

"If this is a mere coincidence, George——"

"—Coincidence!" interrupted Maitland. "Man alive! Do you realise what the mathematical likelihood of that would be? Do you know anything about the mathematics of chance—the calculus of probabilities?—But, there, lay the blade upon the paper, and see how perfectly the nicks in it correspond with that record."

"They fit it like an indenture!" exclaimed the doctor. "But tell me," he continued excitedly, "where did you get this knife?"

"I borrowed it to sharpen a pencil, and *accidentally* returned it to my own pocket," was the reply.

"You absent-minded beggar! But come, out with it: of whom did you borrow it, George?"

"Of 'Charlie Bert'!"

"'*Charlie Bert*'! I'm afraid it's all up with Charlie!"

"You'd have little doubt of it, Ned, if I had time to tell you all I've learned up to date."

"But, George, this will force us to alter some of our earlier theories, won't it?"

"What, for example?"

"The theory that the pistol shot was a signal to notify the assassins that the lights were to be cut off."

"Oh, yes! I gave that up the minute I found out how the lights were put out, and I also developed, instanter, the gravest doubts of the existence of any outside accomplice."

"But the pistol shot—somebody must have fired it, George!"

"Guess who it was, Ned."

"How should I know? I was in the room at the time, not outdoors."

"So was I, and so was I the other day, yet I fired a shot just like that we heard from right where 'Charlie Bert' stood!"

"For heaven's sake, George, what next!—So Charlie fired the shot, as well as put out the lights?"

"That's the way I figure it, Ned."

"But how did he do it? Unless you can explain that——"

"—Which I can do!" interrupted Maitland. "It's just another pretty bit of mechanism. Loaded, self-cocking revolver in top of ventilator pipe; a piece of soft iron fastened to trigger for an armature; magnet to work the same; five cells of dry battery concealed in wall near by; wires running to contacts under floor; loose board and ink-spot as before. Pretty, isn't it? I call it clever. Most anyone *else* doing that trick would have wired up to the desk, and then we should have dropped on to the whole scheme the moment we moved that article of furniture."

"But in each case there was the danger of someone else accidentally operating the mechanism," said the doctor.

"That was practically negligible, and if it had occurred, who would have been the wiser?" replied his companion. "In the first place, the loose boards were positioned where they would not be unintentionally stepped on 'once in a blue moon.' Then they were so narrow that they could not be operated except by pressing with the point of the toe or the edge of the boot. One might *walk* over them both till doomsday without springing either mechanism. It was by the merest chance that I happened to operate one of them. You know the mannerism I have of sticking the toe of my right boot on the floor and vibrating my foot like *that*, when thinking? That's how it happened; so, you see, my gaucheries occasionally stand me in good stead. After that I *reasoned* out the pistol mechanism, and then verified my suspicions by search. You see the pistol shot was intended to mislead us, by causing us to conclude that there was an accomplice outside who cut the light main,—which end it effected to the queen's taste. Then, too, it served to add to the panic which, a moment later, unfitted even the coolest of us for rational observation. You see, that perfectly innocent lineman that John White saw, though a mere 'happenstance,' was a godsend to our friend Bertram. Things couldn't have transpired better for him.

"Was there ever a murder committed more unusual than this in many of its essential details? Forget, for a moment, all that we now know which assists us in fastening the crime upon Bertram and Gates, and try to remember just where we stood immediately after Moreton's murder. So strange a crime might be expected to have an unmistakable motive,—yet we couldn't for the life of us be sure what it was, simply because the *motive* varied as the *suspect* varied. By properly selecting our suspect, we could get almost any motive we

desired; and, conversely, by choosing the proper motive we could get any suspect we desired. What could be more unusual than those unmistakable finger-prints on the victim's throat? and yet, see how they hindered, rather than helped, the correct solution of this mystery. Take, also, our gruesome find of Moreton's headless body. Was it not a decidedly outré thing that the body should have been buried *there* of all places? Was it not still more singular that the head should be missing under the peculiar circumstances?"

"To just what do you refer by 'peculiar circumstances' in this connection?" the doctor asked.

"I will explain," replied his companion. "Had the body been found deprived of everything which might lead to its identification, floating in the Hudson, say, we should not have been troubled in the least to guess why the head had been removed. We should have said at once it was to render identification difficult and uncertain, if not impossible. But when we found the victim's body interred within the very shadow of the building in which he met his death,—interred, remember, with jewelry and other possessions which were identifiable beyond a peradventure,—we were forced to conclude that the removal of the head was not caused by any considerations of identification. When we had progressed thus far, we clearly saw that the decapitation was what you would call a very outré act."

"I get your meaning now," said the doctor.

"The presence of a Maori at the meeting was decidedly unusual, and, coupled with what we knew of the gruesome commodity known as the 'New Zealand head,' was most suggestive. We had no choice but to follow the clue to its end, yet you see how it misled us. Now consider, for a moment, that hieroglyph,—the Sign of the Thirteen,—which we met at every turn.

Taken in connection with Adrian's warning letters, did it not seem to point at White with the directness of a beam of light? Yet you see, there again we were deceived. This very outré thing, which inevitably led us to feel sure of White, now turns out to be one of the many crushing evidences against Bertram. See how capitally 'Charlie Bert's' candidacy for the questionable distinction of being considered Moreton's murderer stands every test we can put upon it. He was Moreton's clerk, and he and Gates handled all his correspondence and filed all his letters. He had read these warning letters of Adrian's and filed them away. After the robbery he picked them out of the debris on the floor and again filed them. He knew, to a nicety, James Moreton's fears, and he built his structure of crime upon the foundation of his employer's dread. Bertram wrote all the threatening letters, and used the Sign of the Thirteen upon each of them, and, for that matter, everywhere else where it could be made to tell upon his employer's fears. Wherever, in this case, we do not find that hieroglyph to be the badge of *Te Toke* membership, we may assume, with the utmost confidence, that it is the signature of a young man with a very remarkable mind, and the name of Charles Bertram."

"But how can you be sure he wrote the threatening letters, George?" asked the doctor. "Aren't you a little hasty in assuming that? It doesn't do to place too much reliance upon the testimony of handwriting experts, you know; and in most of these letters, which were typewritten, you haven't even that to assist you."

"Ned, I wouldn't convict a dog on the testimony of the best handwriting expert who ever befuddled a jury! In this case, however, I have something a great deal

better, Doc. There's no appeal from the individuality of a typewriter——"

"—Oh, I——"

"Stop it! You know very well I mean a machine—not a girl. You needn't harbour any doubts about those letters being written by 'Charlie Bert' upon the office typewriter."

"Or by Gates?" ventured the doctor.

"They are not in his 'typewriting,'" rejoined Maitland.

"Do you mean that you can tell the difference between the work of two operators using the same machine?"

"In this particular case such is undeniably the fact, as I will demonstrate when I have more time. By the way, Ned, in considering 'Charlie Bert,' I want to call to your mind the fact that the conduct of every being is determined by two factors. First: the individual who acts, *in his totality*, which you may call the 'personal equation,' if you choose; and, second: the environment in which he acts, *in its totality*. We have first to consider 'Charlie Bert's' personal equation. Do we not find an intellectual power akin to genius, with that concomitance of insanity which we so often observe in the case of real genius? This crime is, as it were, but the replica of his game of chess. I ought not to have to tell you, a physician, of the strange, almost weird, inconsistencies to be found in an alienated mind, even when apparently acting in full possession of its faculties. Here, for example, will be gratuitously performed some easily avoidable and bizarre act, which at once lays the subject open to the very suspicion he most wishes to avoid; and there, in the next moment, will be exhibited a masterly cleverness which will deceive the very elect. Now 'Charlie Bert' has exhibited in this

crime just those inconsistencies for which a skilled alienist would confidently have looked. He seems to have taken a morbid pleasure in achieving the apparently impossible, even when a simpler and safer course might have been pursued."

"That is often characteristic of diseased minds," said the doctor. "Just why they should prefer to get from one end of the house to the other by walking the ridge-pole, when they could so much more safely and easily traverse the hall, is a bit hard to see, but it is a fact, nevertheless."

"Now we know," continued Maitland, "that Charlie is what is commonly called 'sporty'; that he craves excitement as most men crave food; and that his mind is unceasingly restive. His versatility would prove this last, even if we had nothing else to do it. Then there is his history. He is the ending figure of a long sum of degenerates. His exceptional brilliancy is merely another instance of Nature's love of the antithesis. We would naturally expect him to be foolish, but our common mother pushes him well on toward genius, just to jostle our egotism, and to teach us that she is not to be measured with our little ell of prophecy.—So much for the personal equation. Now for the matter of environment. I will not tire you by going into this at length. We have to consider his home life; his relations with 'The Eichberg'; his work; his pastimes; the kind of companions with whom he associates; and last, but by no means least, the general social sea in which he is immersed. It is of this last that I wish to speak. The rest you cannot fail already to appreciate."

"I don't quite get your drift," ventured the doctor.

"You will in a minute, Ned," his companion replied. "*As the price of bread rises the walls of safes thicken*, all values being, of course, measured in terms of labour.

The frequency of murder is inversely as the sacredness of life, and the sacredness of life is directly as its desirability. Given a community where life is a recognised failure,—where the struggle for existence blasts the flower of zest,—and you have a condition of affairs preeminently calculated to foster murderous impulses. Add to this the horror of epaulets and brass buttons, with its concomitant glorification of murder mathematically expressed, and echoing daily through the resonant emptiness of a besotted press, and you still farther lower society's respect for human life. Let, now, a miserable spirit of commercialism attach a monetary value to everything, from where the angel hangs his harp to where the devil pokes the fire, and embodied damnation tears wide open the black blossom of murder in every heart that has its root and stalk!"

"Strange, that I never thought of it in that way," said Willard, after a pause.

"I tell you, Ned," resumed Maitland, with great earnestness, "if present conditions in this country be continued, they will soon make life as little valued as it is in the worst fever section of the African coast."

There was a moment's pause, and then the doctor said somewhat sadly:

"So it's all up with poor Charlie! It's a great pity, for I can't help liking the fellow, George, despite his failings."

"I'm sorry, Doc," replied Maitland, "but the evidence I already have against him, and I'm by no means done yet, would be enough to convict the Angel Gabriel."

"You'll ask for his arrest at once, I suppose," said Willard.

"I don't want to, but I may have to," answered his companion. "You see, Sheehan and Burke will pounce upon him if they learn a tithe of what I know, and while

I am confident they will never discover anything through real ability, there's no knowing what they may stumble upon. I'd feel pretty mean if they cut under me and took that reward."

"Why not arrest Charlie at once, then?" asked the doctor.

"Because that would make every one of his friends shut up tighter than an oyster," replied the other. "There is still considerable that I can learn in the matter, and I dislike to show my hand till I have my case complete in every particular. I'm afraid, though, I shall have to do it, in this instance."

"You said in the case of White, if you remember, that you could hardly attempt to prove that he *did* the deed, until you were at least able to show how he *might* have done it," ventured the doctor.

"Well, what of it?" asked Maitland.

"Why, that's just what you will be doing now, if you ask for Charlie's arrest. You can't tell how 'Charlie Bert' got the corpse out of the room, can you?"

Maitland looked at him for a moment with a quizzical expression on his face and then said:

"I answer in the language of the old Quaker: '*First thee tells a lie, and then thee asks a question.*'"

CHAPTER V

Most of us have learned better than to expect a fair appreciation of our virtues, or a just censure of our faults. We have at last come to realise that there is a sort of magnetic lag to our environment,—a kind of inertia to public opinion,—which ever tends to make gratitude an *ex post facto* mockery of the dead. Somehow or other the laurel wreath which should have adorned our brother's brow, gets upon his grave instead. We have come to expect all this—to take it as a matter of course that our generous acts shall go without external reward, but when a tricksy Fate "credits" our virtues on the debit side of her account, and makes our noblest sacrifices rise up against and damn us, even the rosiest optimist begins to doubt if the divine mechanism of Truth and Right have not somehow slipped a cog.

Elbert Reiss sat at his desk with an open envelope before him, and an expression of supreme content upon his countenance. He had undergone a marvellous transformation during the last few days,—and all as the result of a lesson in calisthenics. Think of it! There was not a solitary "blue devil" left an hour after the first treatment!—He took up the envelope, which bore the address: "Miss Marion Sherwood, Odeon Theatre, Broadway, New York," opened it, took out a little slip of paper, and read again the lines he had written:

TO MARION.

If thoughts were things, my Love,
And wishes could create,
All things were fair, my Love,
In thy estate.

Rose-strewn thy path, my Love,
And gently placed thy feet;
Spared all the sour, my Love,
Given all the sweet.

O'er thy dear heart, my Love,
To turn all shafts of Fate,
Were ever bound, my Love,
Its throbbing mate.

Oh, it were sweet, my Love,
To stand 'twixt thee and Pain,
Bearing the loss, my Love,
Giving the gain.

Making thy life, my Love,
Eternal without age;
A book of Youth, my Love,
Sans final page!

Such is the heaven, my Love,
My adoration brings,
When wishes shall create, my Love,
And thoughts be things.

. . . . .

And thoughts *are* things, my Love,
And wishes *can* create;
And *thy* love loves, *my* Love,
With love insatiate.

And *that* is Heaven, my Love,
And Heaven will ever be,
And that's *alway*, my Love,
For you and me.

When he had finished reading, the artist folded the paper, and, reinclosing it in the envelope, sealed and stamped the same.

As Reiss was leaving the studio to post the letter he met Maitland at the door.

"I was just going out to mail this letter," he said, gesturing carelessly with the article referred to, quite unconscious that the address was uppermost. "It can wait, however," he continued, ushering his visitor into the studio.

Maitland's quick eye caught the address.

"You are still taking my treatment, I see; and I am

pleased to believe a speedy cure is already assured," he laughingly rejoined.

For a moment the artist made no reply. Then he came and placed both hands upon Maitland's shoulders:

"George," he said slowly, "I owe to you far more than life. Nothing can ever repay my debt of gratitude, nor aught efface my consciousness of it. You forced me into heaven against my will, and but for your cleverness I should have remained forever lost in the outer darkness,—a mere moaning plaint in the great night of the damned. I offer no audible thanks, for words cannot unpack the soul; but, believe me, I know, I appreciate, and I will *remember!*"

For a long time neither spoke again. At length Maitland said gently:

"Now, go and post the letter, that she may get it tonight. I will keep shop till you return."

George had not long to wait alone, for Eric passed Reiss upon the stairs.

"How goes The International Wireless?" asked Maitland. "Do I get some dividends pretty soon, eh?"

"I'm afraid not yet awhile," Eric replied. "Everything is going on so well, however, that our new president, Mr. Adrian Moreton, has a scheme on foot to increase the capitalisation to twenty-five million dollars. He says we are undercapitalised."

"And how do you like your new president, now that you know more of him?" George asked. "Is he like his brother?"

"Oh, not in the least!" exclaimed Eric. "He seems to be a perfect gentleman, and I never thought that James Eldredge merited that title. It would be hard to find two individuals more unlike than these two brothers in manner, habits,—in fact in everything,—except, of course, something of a family resemblance, and even

that is not apparent to the casual observer. Adrian's dark skin and tattooed face make him look like a foreigner."

"And what is his plan for increasing the capitalisation of The International Wireless?" George asked.

"He has organised another company with the capital stock aforesaid, and proposes to buy out the present company at its face value," Eric replied.

"Do you mean that he proposes to pay five million dollars spot cash?" his companion asked in surprise.

"Well, not exactly," said Eric. "His scheme is this: The present company holds, of course, all the patent rights. Now he proposes to take over all our assets, and to pay for the same in cash at stated intervals; the stock of the new company being held in escrow, under an agreement which provides that if any of these payments be not duly made, the stipulated blocks of stock set against them shall be delivered to us as a forfeiture, *i. e.*, in lieu of the payment."

"Do you know, under this arrangement, how much money would have to be paid the present company before the new company could secure a controlling interest in its stock?" asked Maitland.

"Four million six hundred thousand dollars," Eric replied.

"You are willing, I suppose, to chance it on the other four hundred thousand," said George.

"Well, I should say so!" rejoined his companion.

"And is this new deal likely to go through?" questioned Maitland.

"Yes, indeed; the papers are all drawn," said Eric, "and most of them are signed by this time, I suppose. They can't boom matters too fast to——"

But he did not finish his sentence, for at this moment Mrs. Moreton entered the studio, and Eric, with mani-

fest excitement and a very red face, hastened to greet her, while Maitland looked at his watch and suddenly discovered that he had stayed over long.

. . . . .

"Well, George, what have you discovered now?" asked Dr. Willard the moment his friend entered his presence.

"You know that cipher, Ned?"

"Yes."

"No, you don't."

"'You are a—senator'! if you'll pardon my quoting Shakespeare."

"Oh, Doc! 'senator' is worse than I deserve," laughed Maitland. "But come! I've solved the nightmare!"

"What?"

"I have. But there are other matters to take up first."

"Out with them, then! Can't you see that I'm on pins and needles?" ejaculated Willard.

"Under such conditions,—or rather with such conditions under you,—you ought to feel sharp enough to translate the thing alone," laughed his companion. "However, I'll tell you,—in good time. First, I must advise you of what I have discovered about that 'wooden-grasshopper' message, as you call it, which came to you from the spirit of Mr. James Eldredge Moreton *via* Madame Duval. I went again to the Madame for the express purpose of studying her planchette. My suspicions were aroused by the firmness of the letters composing the message. Now, I figured that, in all probability, there would be more or less vibration, looseness, or back-lash in the mechanism interposed between the hand and the registering point of the pencil. I couldn't detect any evidence of this, and it

aroused my suspicions. I noted further that in the sixth word of the message, the word 'forbid,' the down strokes of the 'f,' the 'o' and the 'r' were relatively wide and coarse, while the similarly directed strokes of the 'b,' the 'i' and 'd' were much narrower and finer. I immediately examined the back of the paper to note the relative degrees of indentation, or, as a printer would say, to examine the 'impression.' I found that there was no indentation visible in either case, which led me to infer that the writing was done while the paper rested upon a hard surface, and that the different width of the lines was not the result of difference in pressure. As the strokes of that part of the word *first* written were the coarsest, I could not, of course, think that the observed phenomena resulted from the wearing away of the pencil-point, for pencils, held in one position, never wear *sharper*."

"And what did you conclude?"

"Simply this: that the first syllable of the word 'forbid' had been written with a blunt portion of the pencil-lead, and that the pencil had then been turned so as to bring a sharp corner of its lead into use. That message was written with a pencil held in the hand. There are numerous other evidences making toward the same conclusion. For example: I detected a little dot over the 'i' in the word 'it'! I put it under a sixth-of-an-inch objective, and the whole thing was exposed."

"What,—what was exposed?" asked Willard.

"First, the fact that it was a pencil-mark which our clever fraud had unthinkingly and from sheer force of habit placed there for a dot to the 'i'; and, second, that the pencil had been twirled in the making of the mark, as is so common a practice when slowly writing with a moderately hard pencil on moderately smooth paper. Then, too, the accuracy of its location pre-

cluded the idea that it was put there by the 'wooden grasshopper.'"

"You spoke of the Madame's giving you a planchette message. Did you learn anything from that?" the doctor questioned.

"Yes; it was corroborative of all I have just told you," Maitland replied. "I put this 'sure-enough' planchette message under the microscope, and then I examined yours with the same care. There was this important distinction: in your message the lines were continuous, while in mine they were seen, under the glass, to be discontinuous,—as if produced by a vibrating stylus. Now, the pencil in the Madame's planchette is held in a vertical position, which causes it, whenever it catches slightly in the paper, to spring the mechanism a trifle. When the pencil disengages itself from the paper the mechanism recoils, causing it to make a little jump,—in short to 'chatter' like an improperly set lathe-tool; and this 'chatter' is plainly visible in the magnified record."

The doctor was silently thoughtful for a moment, then he said:

"But how did the Madame counterfeit the dead man's handwriting?"

"The same way you did, I fancy,—which is to say, she probably traced it from some of Mr. Moreton's letters and then pantographed it up to the requisite size," Maitland replied.

"But, George, where did she find these letters?" Willard asked.

"Where did you get yours?" George rejoined.

"Mine?—Why, I made my tracing from letters I borrowed from Dr. Carew," answered the doctor.

"Precisely," replied his companion; "and I'd wager that's just where the Madame got hers."

"For heaven's sake! what do you mean, George?" ejaculated Willard. "Do you imagine a physician and a gentleman like Dr. Carew has any dealings with a person like the Madame,—or is even aware of her existence, for that matter?"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Maitland. "Are *you* not a physician, and am *I* not a gentleman, and have *we* not had dealings with the Madame?" he continued, with a laugh. "Is it so very different, eh, when both the gentleman and the physician are under one hat?"

"Well, *I* like that!" retorted Willard. "But come; you know what I mean. Dr. Carew is a man of most excellent repute,—a physician who stands upon the topmost rung of the professional ladder. I know something of the gentleman, and I can assure you, George, that he is without a superstition, and that the Madame is the very last woman in the world with whom he would ever have any dealings."

"She came much nearer being the very first, Ned!" was the rejoinder. "But set your mind at rest. Dr. Carew is one of the salt of the earth. There's quite a bit to it, Doc, and we'd better take it in its proper order. First, let us review a bit, and get a correct point of departure. Charles Bertram has murdered his employer, Mr. James Eldredge Moreton,—never mind how, or who helped him. Let's waive all details. The main motives actuating the assassin were, first, a desire to conceal his heavy defalcations, and, second, the hope to secure a large sum of money by the robbery which immediately followed the murder. Since the crime was long premeditated, as we now know beyond a doubt, it is evident that the *specific* robbery committed was not part of the original plan. That a large sum of money was placed where Bertram could get it was

an eleventh-hour stroke of luck of which he was not slow to take speedy advantage. Just how the safe was opened, as well as just where Charlie learned the little trick, I know to a nicety,—but of that later. Now, 'The Eichberg' has our friend Bertram completely enmeshed in her web. What he gets, she will get. The Madame is Rachel Eichberg's mother. What the daughter gets the mother will also share. So, you see, we can easily account for any interest Madame Duval may have displayed in this matter. Of the Madame's great love of money we have abundant proof. That wonderful supernatural power, you see, which enabled her to direct us to James Moreton's grave, is now very easily explained. In her prime the Madame was the belle of Hooker Section, Washington. Her successor to the proud distinction of being the rarest bit of feminine loveliness in the Section was Rachel Eichberg,——"

"—The Madame's daughter!" interrupted the doctor in amazement.

"No; not her daughter—wait a bit," replied Maitland. "The daughter is Rachel No. 2, while she of whom I am now speaking was Rachel No. 1, a young woman about the age of the Madame's daughter, and, so far as anyone knew, without parents, relatives or dependencies of any sort. When the Madame began to lose her youthful freshness she took a lodging-house in a respectable portion of the city and became, at the same time, a sort of spiritualistic doctress. She rented her rooms profitably to 'gentlemen only,' and built up, besides, a very lucrative if not strictly high-toned practice. On one fatal day Rachel Eichberg—that is to say, Rachel No. 1—came to the Madame in great trouble. She had plenty of money, and offered a price which the Madame could not resist. As a result, Madame Duval administered a course of treatment not

in accord with the laws of our good land, and the effects whereof are said to have all but frightened her out of her senses. Well, to make a long story short, when it seemed certain that Rachel would speedily die on her hands she began to cast about for assistance. A regular practitioner was out of the question. Her front room, one flight up, was occupied by a student who was studying medicine. In her terror she rushed to him for assistance, and told him the whole story in a breath. The young man had a college acquaintance visiting him at the time, but Madame Duval was so excited that she did not even notice his presence. The medical student was Henry Forsythe Carew——!"

"—You don't mean it!" interjected the doctor.

"—And his acquaintance was James Eldredge Moreton," Maitland continued. "Well, the Madame secured young Carew's assistance, and even succeeded in making him believe that the best chance to save the sufferer would be found in continuing the malpractice she had begun. It was no time for sober thought. It was Carew's first case, and that in itself would have made him too excited to think calmly; but to this was added all the horror of the circumstances. With nothing but the kindliest motives at heart,—the sincerest desire to do right,—he submitted to the Madame's masterfulness, and in so doing made the first great mistake of his life.—*The patient died under his hand!*

"Then they all tried to hush it up. Moreton and Carew, the Madame, her daughter, and the housekeeper were all that were privy to the affair at that time. Rachel No. 1 was not at all known in the quarter of the city where the Madame resided, which fact had been one of the chief reasons for her going thither. She had no relatives, and her demise, the Madame reasoned, was not likely to cause any considerable comment,—in fact

her absence would probably not be noticed, except by a few fickle admirers. The great problem was what to do with the body. Young Carew dared not let his part in the affair be known, for his mother was in very feeble health, and, quite apart from the penalty the law might inflict upon him, he was morally certain the disclosure would kill her. He besought his acquaintance, James Moreton, to assist him, which that young gentleman did with the same marked ability which characterised most of his efforts."

"What did he do, George?" questioned Willard.

"As soon as they all recovered in a measure from the horror of Rachel's death they held a whispered consultation. The Madame was the most resourceful of the lot. Her plan was so bold that it shocked everyone else but Moreton, yet its very boldness was its strongest recommendation. It was to placard the house with a diphtheria-card, and then to announce, a little later, that her own daughter, known then as Elsie Mayne, had died of virulent diphtheria. In this way it was proposed to bury the dead woman in regular form, the Madame relying upon the malignant nature of the disease to prevent any undue curiosity. As soon as it was dark Elsie Mayne left the house stealthily and came here to New York, where, in compliance with her mother's request, she at once assumed the name of the dead woman,—Rachel Eichberg! The certificate of death and the undertaker were the two factors which caused the gravest concern, but Moreton and the Madame were quite equal to the occasion. The good lady had on her list of acquaintances one or two physicians who would commit any offence, provided they were paid in proportion to its gravity; and they, in their turn, knew undertakers who did business on a similarly high ethical plane,—and no questions asked."

"And Dr. Carew bought these men?" asked the doctor.

"Not exactly," replied his companion. "Henry Carew had no money, but James Moreton came to his friend's assistance. It cost him a pretty penny, but he paid it, and the remains of Rachel Eichberg, enclosed in a hermetically sealed casket marked '*Elsie Mayne*,' were safely deposited in the northernmost corner of Mount Olivet Cemetery, close to the B. & O. track. I have seen the grave, and read the little inscription upon the headstone which marks its location. Thus ended the real Rachel Eichberg."

"How did you learn all this, George?" Ned asked.

"That, in itself, is quite a story,—too long, in fact, to tell now," replied Maitland. "You will see, however, that Madame Duval can at any time get from Dr. Carew almost any gift within his power to bestow. His mother still lives; and he has, in the meantime, earned a high reputation. He heads his profession in New York. There is no fear of *his* ever uncovering the stain upon his past. What then? Suppose, now, the Madame and Dr. Carew should quarrel? and suppose she should suddenly turn State's evidence and make a clean breast of it all?"

"George, it would be awful! It would kill both Carew and his aged mother!" exclaimed Willard, rising and pacing the floor.

"All the more reason, then, that it should not *occur*," replied his companion; "and all the more reason that Henry Forsythe Carew should be good—very, very good—to Madame Ernestine Duval, a lady with ability, a history, and a temper. Be sure of it, Doc, all that *you* see, *she* sees, and more too; and, seeing it, she will not fail to make it tell to her advantage."

"And you think, then?"

"I think," replied Maitland, "that Dr. Carew would

have loaned the Madame, for the mere asking, any of the letters James Moreton ever wrote to him."

"And do you suppose that Dr. Carew is aware that James Moreton met his death at 'Charlie Bert's' hands?" asked Willard.

"No; I'm not quite prepared to go that far, Doc," replied his companion. "Carew is a fine fellow. The assassin has fooled him, even as he fooled us."

"You said you had solved the cryptogram, George. What is it all about?" asked Willard.

"It is about the last nail I have driven in 'Charlie Bert's' coffin," Maitland replied.

CHAPTER VI

Much of modern financiering is but a variation of the old three-card monte game. This modification consists in the fact that whereas, in the old game the court-card which you are asked to locate is really there before you, in the new commercial monte it has no tangible existence whatsoever, being merely a figment of that vaporous ferment known as the financiering brain; wherefore it happens that one plays in this modern substitute for the old game, not merely against the dexterity of his opponent, but also against a predetermined fate as inexorable, cold-blooded, and heartless as—as the dominant spirit of latter-day commercialism.

EVENTS seemed to prove that the business capacity of Mr. Adrian Canova Moreton was of no ordinary kind, for scarcely was the escrow "deal" closed between The International Wireless Telephone Company, capitalised at five million dollars, and The Consolidated Wireless Telephone Company, capitalised at twenty-five million dollars, before the affairs of this latter company assumed such a roseate hue that Wall Street was green with a not altogether complimentary envy.

When the agreements had been drawn someone had asked that a clause be inserted permitting the shareholders in the International to exchange their holdings for stock in the Consolidated, at terms mutually to be agreed upon; and providing that, in the event of such trading, these stock transactions should be credited to the account of the Consolidated, and made to apply to the last payments due the International under the escrow agreements. What could be more liberal on the part of the Consolidated? They contracted to pay face-value for the International's entire stock. If, now, some of the shareholders of that company preferred stock of

the Consolidated to cash, it was certainly liberal, on the part of the larger company, to permit them to trade in a way that prevented the most carping critic from claiming that it was all a scheme to stave off the promised cash payments. Such an idea was clearly negatived by the fact that these credits were applicable only to the last payments under the escrow agreements.

It need scarcely be said that the men who managed the Consolidated were the same men who directed the International. Commercialism has its own system of ethics, even as it has its own code of etiquette, and in each *self* is God. Had a shareholder written to the secretary of the Consolidated, asking for information regarding his holdings, that functionary would have answered his letter, provided he wished to suggest to him a stock assessment for his own benefit or that of his friends, but if he had no axe to grind, his correspondent might whistle till he blew his communication out of the waste-basket! Perchance the information he besought was vital to his interests, but what of that? Could he, forsooth, expect good business men to consider any of *his* needs, unless it profited them so to do? *A bas* the thought! Let there be no sentiment in business! Courtesy, like wheat, is a commodity to be paid for,—albeit it was accidentally left off the *London Index*.

When the roseate prospects of the Consolidated got abroad, there was a veritable stampede among the shareholders of the International to exchange their stock for that of the larger corporation, under the permissive escrow clause. After some "dickering" the Consolidated generously agreed to trade share for share.

This exchange of stock did not altogether please Eric Montrose. Not that he questioned the value of the Consolidated's shares,—that seemed fully assured,—but he felt that the escrow agreements offered him, and his

fellow-shareholders also, for that matter, a liberal certainty with which they ought to be content. He expressed his views along this line to a number of the largest stockholders of the International, but all to no purpose.

"What does it matter how much our escrow contract gives us, if we can see a way to get more?" was a terse expression of the general consensus of opinion. As easily could Eric have checked the wild stampede of a herd of buffalo; and so, when, with the exception of his own holdings, all but a hundred shares or so of the International had been exchanged for an equal number of shares of Consolidated, he "joined the procession," as he put it, and exchanged his holdings. The gathering in of the few shares still outstanding was an easy matter.

Thus was accomplished a most unique bit of financiering,—to wit: the purchase of a thing by the refunding of a small portion of itself. It was, in effect, precisely as if a boy, having no apples, had "bought" the twenty-five his companion possessed, under an agreement reading: "If you'll let me have your twenty-five Pippins, I'll give you back five of them in payment for the other twenty." Verily! the three-card monte of high finance out-Houdins Houdin, and out-Hellers Heller!

When Eric had told Maitland of the increase of capitalisation, George had merely whistled. When, however, Maitland had related the news to his friend Willard, he had closed his narration by quoting *in extenso* the following touching poem, entitled:

"AQUA PURA.

"Little drops of water,
Little grains of dust,
Make the mighty stock shares
Of the mighty trust.

"Soon the combination
Will blow up and bust;
Then we'll get the water
And they'll get the dust."

George Maitland had never had any extensive dealings with financiers,—in fact he did not even know that modern high finance is the *mobile perpetuum* of commercialdom,—the only engine in the universe capable of getting something for nothing without losing itself.

He knew something of the ordinary, vulgar thief, but he had never deeply studied the procedure of the *legal* highwayman. The difference between the two is purely a difference of method, and is aptly illustrated by the Irishman's chiding remark to his son, when visiting him in jail, whither he had been sent for horse-thieving: "If ye wanted the horse, phwhy wud ye be afther stalin' 'im loike a blackguard? Phwhy didn't ye buy him, loike a gintleman, an' not pay fur 'im?"

All those business transactions in which, heretofore, Maitland had actually participated had been of that primitive, prosaic, and lack-lustre sort where one value was exchanged for another; so that it is not to be wondered at that he was not "up" in that gentle art of high finance which might almost be called "filching a victim's consent." Yet, despite this fact, his native common sense told him at once that trouble was brewing for someone.

He did not consider his knowledge of the details of the somewhat complex agreements sufficient to warrant him in voicing his more or less vague fears to Eric, so he awaited results in silence, so far as the young inventor was concerned.

"I have some news for you, Elbert," said Eric Mont-

rose, as he abruptly entered the studio where Reiss sat painting. "It seems that someone has been telling Mr. Adrian Moreton of his brother James's infatuation for Miss Sherwood. Mr. Adrian Moreton waited upon Miss Sherwood yesterday afternoon, in the vague hope, as he put it, that she might be able to give him some hint which would shed a ray of light on his brother's murder. You see, Adrian was on the other side of the earth when the events preceding the tragedy were transpiring here, and it is but natural that he should view as a possible clue every relationship his brother James was known to have had just previous to his murder. Well, he was so impressed by his interview with Miss Sherwood that he went to 'The Odeon' last night to see her *Rosalind*. When he came over to Jersey this afternoon he could talk of nothing else. It is plain that he is deeply smitten. You'd better announce your engagement to Miss Sherwood, and be done with it. You don't know how much better I felt after Marie and I announced ours."

"I am much obliged, Eric, for the suggestion," replied Reiss, with a smile; "but I think I shall never feel more sure of Miss Sherwood than I do at this moment. I have done her one grievous wrong; you may be sure I never shall add such another to it. Come what may, I shall never doubt her again!"

. . . . .

George Maitland was at his laboratory table with his head bent close to the eye-piece of his microscope, when his friend Willard entered.

"I came over here," said Willard, "fully convinced that I should never learn the true inwardness of that typewriter-nightmare."

"I've known it all for a long time," replied Maitland;

"but it didn't mean anything till I saw its relation to 'Charlie Bert,' when it dropped into its proper niche in my theory like a bit of enamel in an Alexandrine mosaic. Listen. You remember how, some months before Moreton's death, both he and I were assaulted over in Jersey? Well, that was one of the slickest tricks that ever emanated from that somewhat remarkable bunch on 'Charlie Bert's' shoulders."

"And was that, too, Charlie's work?"

"Yes, sir! all roads lead to 'Charlie Bert,'" Maitland rejoined. "When we were about to leave the main Broad Street office on that memorable afternoon James Moreton went into the side-office and told Charlie where we were going. As soon as we were safely out of the way this astute young man telephoned his two accomplices to be on the lookout for us. Charlie had doubtless planned to have Moreton waylaid when alone; but, for some reason which I have not yet ascertained, he preferred that we should both be 'tackled' rather than longer to postpone the business. I ought, I suppose, to tell you that I am giving you some of the minor details of this affair, as I know, from my own reasoning, they *must* have occurred. For instance: I did not, of course, see Charlie telephone after we had left the office; yet I know, notwithstanding, that he must have done so in order to have his men in waiting for us. With this explanation I can now proceed. Eight things I particularly noticed as pertaining to the first part of the episode, by which I mean to include everything which transpired up to the time when our assailant sought refuge in the shanty. First, my assailant's immense jaw; second, the hieroglyph—The Sign of the Thirteen—upon the back of his hand; third, a peculiar odour which, do my best, I could not refer to any substance with which I was then familiar; fourth, the burly

ruffian's great bulk; fifth, the slowness with which he ran; sixth, the astonishing ease with which he vaulted the high fence; seventh, the relatively slight injury which my terrific kick seemed to inflict upon him; and, eighth, the inexplicable course he took for a man apparently bent on effecting his escape. These were the things that I remembered as soon as I began to go over the matter carefully and leisurely."

"And what did you make out of them?" asked Willard.

"At first, nothing," George replied. "Just before I left for New Zealand I waited upon John White. On that occasion I smelled again not only the odour I had noticed upon the burly ruffian's person, but also that which I detected in the shanty. At the time, it simply convinced me that John White and my burly assailant were in some way associated.—This is the way the case appeared to me then. James Moreton had long been the recipient of letters threatening his life,—letters every one of which bore the mysterious hieroglyph. At length an actual attempt had been made to assassinate him; and one, at least, of the assailants was known to be tattooed with the same inexplicable figure. I had just visited John White and had discovered, before he could conceal it, the identical symbol upon the upper part of his chest. I had also detected both of the odours which had attracted my attention in connection with the assault. It was all as straight as a string! How could anything circumstantial be more convincing? Look at the case we had against White! Everything pointed his way. Psychologically he committed that murder, and it was simply outrageous of him to let anyone else perform the *act!* But to return. There was one matter connected with the assault of which I have never told you. When I got home I noticed upon my sleeve a

greasy smudge, as if it had been rubbed with a pink tallow candle. The slight odour I was able to detect was the selfsame one I had noted upon my assailant's person, and I have no doubt that the stain was one of the mementoes of our struggle.

"The observation that my assailant had a big, clean-shaven jaw served at that time no other purpose than to make convincing the innocence of the weak-jawed, full-bearded occupant of the shanty. The hieroglyph upon the villain's hand connected him at once with the threatening letters, and,—I felt equally certain,—with John White. The odours pointed to White again, and had no further significance for a considerable period. The ruffian's great bulk accounted for the slowness with which he ran, but both of these observations were entirely inconsistent with the ease with which he vaulted the fence. The rapidity with which he recovered from my vicious kick was unaccounted for; while the method he took of eluding our pursuit seemed to be about as ridiculous as could well be imagined. Now, don't forget that 'Charlie Bert,' the key which opens all mysterious locks, was not then in my hands.

"When I went to New Zealand I had all these observations and seeming inconsistencies clearly in mind, and had I not persisted in trying to refer the whole thing to White, I should probably then have solved the problem. Now, when I got back to New York White was, of course, clearly out of it; and I soon had a gleam of light which was a veritable revelation; for it showed me that every gossamer line in this mighty web passed through 'Charlie Bert,' as the central spider who had spun them all."

"But I don't see how that helped you in this instance," said the doctor.

"You will, by and by. One night, soon after my

return, I called at 'The Odeon' to see Miss Sherwood for a moment, just as the final curtain was coming down. I went in behind the scenes to wait while she was dressing, and her leading man invited me into his dressing-room. Immediately I smelled both the odours which had so puzzled me. From what do you suppose they proceeded, Doc?"

"I give it up!"

"Grease-paint and cocoa-butter!" said Maitland. "That discovery was the missing link! Things now began to arrange themselves in my mind with some degree of order. The smudge had been made upon my coat sleeve by flesh-coloured grease-paint. That was precisely what I had smelled upon my big antagonist. The odour I detected in the shanty was cocoa-butter! The burly ruffian had used it to remove the paint."

"But why should he have anything to do with grease-paint?"

"Let me give you my rationale of the subject, as it then developed itself in my mind," replied Maitland. "Moreton told Bertram we were going over to the laboratory. Bertram telephoned his men to be ready to waylay us. So much for that. The hieroglyph was painted upon the hand of the bigger ruffian for the same reason that it was used elsewhere, viz.:—to lead suspicion to New Zealand. Nothing could now show 'Charlie Bert's' hand more unmistakably. The grease-paint on my coat sleeve came from my assailant's face, and was of a flesh-colour. Had it been on his hands I should have felt it when I seized them, and should have been smeared with it in many other places. Now what did this grease-paint upon the ruffian's face signify?"

"Possibly that he had tattoo-marks to conceal."

"That's a bit too specific, though the same thought

came to me," Maitland continued. "Let's adopt the last part of it, as I did at the time. *He had something to conceal,* and so resorted to facial make-up. At the word 'make-up' my mind flew off at a theatrical tangent. If his face were made up, why not his body as well. The thought was an inspiration! Perhaps he was a tall, lean, muscular fellow, with a pillow for a paunch—(at the thought it almost seemed to me that I could remember how suspiciously soft he felt when I drove my knee into him!)—and other padding distributed with equal discretion."

"But you have said he could not run fast, George. How did you account for that, upon the assumption that he was thin and strong?"

"I was just about to consider that," replied his companion. "'He ran heavily and vaulted lightly,' I said to myself; 'and he took a course which was the last one any sane man would take, if he really wanted to escape.' Well, the more I thought of it, the more I felt assured that the fugitive did not *desire* to outrun us, and that he had some particular reason for leading us to the little shanty. Can't you conceive that Bertram might have desired that this affair should mislead us just as it has? That's a wonderful head of Charlie's, whether it be judged by its chess-strategies or by its masterly criminal problems; and I find it easy to believe that it could foresee just what has happened. Think how this burly assailant's marvellous disappearance brought us to the very verge of n-dimensional space,—to the Ultima Thule of scientific speculation! Seriously, Doc, it almost drove me to 'Isis Unveiled'! Note, too, the effect it produced upon Moreton himself. It was no inconsiderable factor, as I happen to know, in those considerations which led James Eldredge to offer that very substantial reward which I now expect, with

Charlie's assistance, to secure for my own use and behoof. Now let us take the next step. If the man were more or less elaborately made up, it was clear, from what followed, that the *dénouement* in the shanty had been counted upon from the start; for, had the mere concealment of identity been the actuating purpose of it all, it could much better have been effected by far less elaborate means. Once we assume that the little entertainment in the shanty was prepared for our especial benefit, much becomes clear that was previously inexplicable."

"Well, what, for example?" asked Willard.

"Why the ruffian who could vault a high fence did not run faster; why he did not kill Moreton; why he shut off only part of my wind; why he betook himself to a field of virgin snow, and why he entered a shanty in plain sight of us all,—a shanty from which there was no means of escape so far as we could see."

"But from which, nevertheless, he did escape," interjected the doctor.

"So, also, did we—likewise."

"You are tautological, George."

"You are mistaken, Ned. It was intended that we should be deeply impressed by the danger we had so narrowly escaped, and then utterly bewildered,—when we discovered that our assailant had vanished into thin air,—by the preternatural powers of those leagued against us. To accomplish this, the big fellow had to be gotten rid of. He was not secreted—that was out of the question. Neither did he leave the shanty—I was sure of that, too. What then? Why, then, our assailant and the man with whom we talked must be one and the same individual."

"But, George—the beard! Your assailant was clean-shaven."

"Exactly," replied Maitland. "Our fine gentleman plastered his beard down with soap, then he put a nicely tinted false chin over it and let its edges carefully on to the face with flesh-coloured grease-paint, and the trick was done. It would have passed muster in a far better light than that in which we viewed it, and would have withstood a deal closer scrutiny than it would receive from a man who was enjoying the novel sensations attendant upon an attempt to live without air.—Once in the shanty, and the door bolted, the false chin went into the little stove, the paint was hastily removed from the face, and the counterfeit tattoo from the hand, with cocoa-butter; and the soap was washed from the beard. The padded clothes were then removed and thrown among the rags, or concealed in the bedding, and our assailant was ready for the rise of the curtain. It was a change any good actor would have effected in less than three minutes, and he had a deal longer time than that at his disposal. We escaped from the shanty by the door. When our assailant got good and ready he 'escaped' in like manner. So you see my 'So also did we—likewise,' was not tautological, but did full credit to my usual accuracy and elegance of diction—ahem!—So there you have the shanty episode."

"And that's the answer to n-dimensional problem No. 1, eh?" said the doctor slowly and thoughtfully.

"Say rather that's the explanation. The *answer* is—'Charlie Bert.'"

"And the cipher message, George?"

"Same answer—'Charlie Bert.' When Fate propounds a conundrum in this case, all you have to do is to say, 'Charlie Bert,' and you've guessed it. Now I am prepared to prove, to the satisfaction of any court, that 'Charlie Bert' wrote that cipher. The evidence, though circumstantial, is overwhelming."

"But how did you solve the crazy thing? That's what I want to know!" ejaculated Dr. Willard.

"Well, then, I shall have to ask you to forget that I *have* solved it, while I repeat my whole rationale of the subject," said Maitland. "We have here a paper on which are typewritten certain characters. A hieroglyph with which we have long been familiar seems to add especial importance to the document. The arrangement of characters is clearly not that of any language on earth. We see at once, however, that they are not a mere haphazard hodgepodge, because of certain frequently repeated collocations of letters which never could have occurred as mere coincidences. There is, therefore, at least some method in the arrangement. Let us look at it carefully for a moment."

For a short time the two men perused the following characters:

A$l87fFI 5hubs5 VK9;4g7fRKT"6dF? 24EDxp,p, 9;cY QE5 p,$ry%eq P?9;BLMCW&9;qz3f ZQ5h be9;4g wEx MDwExqs5s p,l8V?"T BZ9;VKqz7f4g7kZBU$ wEx
6dj-vymt5hpi'DEwV?DUp,5sAT f7d6l8wED?VJEp,f3
4aFI9;ez5s (lIf34g(lI5s?VQGP&AB9hp,wED6d l8ez f72dj-ABs5 5hbuf3 p,3fKVEJf7FI 9;SY 8l5hez MDDEwzes5 9r 8lze wED BA9;F?f78lV?7kDEwh58l9;?V ;9YS h5IFs5 a4f3ezf73f6dV? a4EDwp,p, 9;WH QE5 p,ry$qe% MK: RXg4DExa4 wEDx RKR(l-I9;h5tms5F?7kcqT" beg4;9.B 'Eubs5 h59;(Il 9;HW 7ftm8lez lI(3f4gIl(f3VKAT8lAB9hp,DxEd6 f7;9 U$IFs5 v,J K:m ta mK: BZ9;d6F?s56d ;9be 5hbus5 CM9h8lp,vwl8V?vy mK: bHKs5DExcq7kd6s5 ctd69;BL 7ftmj-ze ZB9;4gF?f34g 9h(lI h5FI3f mt6j(Il9;7f5s?V7kcqT" ,pqe% WHh5 i5 QGP&DUKm:

"Now this is either capable of solution or it is not," Maitland continued. "If we are not to abandon it at once we must, of course, proceed upon the assumption that it contains an intelligible message. We see at once that the characters are in groups, as if each character were a component part of a word, and that a space separates each group. But here, for example, is a

group which has twenty-nine characters. Do you know of any word having that number of letters?"

"Oh, yes! The longest word in my remarkably rich vocabulary has just that number of letters to a dot," said the doctor, after studying what he had hastily written upon a bit of paper.

"Doc, you're fibbing!" exclaimed Maitland. "You can't produce such a word!"

"Oh! can't I? What do you say to *deanthropomorphizationability*, eh, Mr. Doubting Thomas?"

"Oho! what do I say? I say you've tied a cat's tail to your rabbit!" was the laughing rejoinder. "The last four syllables are entirely your own production."

"Thank heaven you recognise my '*ability*' for once!" exclaimed Willard. "But you're an inconsistent chap! You challenge me to 'produce' a word, and then try to beg off because, forsooth, *one-third* of its syllables are my '*own production*'!"

"I cry you mercy, Ned!—But come!—When we look again we also discover that there is no word represented by a single character. Now in a document of the length which we assume this to have, would it not be remarkable if neither an 'I' nor an 'a' occurred? I think so; and this strengthens the assumption that more than one character is required to represent a letter. Let us see if we can determine how many. We would, of course, be glad if we could say 'two,' but alas! In the very first line we find a group 'QE5'; nor is this a solitary exception, for we discover several other groups of three, and when we begin to count the various collocations, we note that by no means all of them are composed of an even number of characters, as would invariably be the case were each letter represented by two characters."

"Suppose we try three, then," suggested the doctor.

"That is precisely what I did; for I said: 'If three be the number, then in all probability 'QE5' is an 'a' or an 'I,' and to come that near to the translation of a single word is a most important achievement," Maitland continued. "Alas! for my hopes. The very first group contained eight characters! As eight is not a multiple of three, I was obliged to abandon the idea that *three* was the correct number."

"How about four?" asked Willard.

"Three's too many. I saw almost immediately that some groups had only two characters. What then? It was clear that if number were a factor in the matter at all, it was a *shifting* factor. I adopted this conclusion, as a tentative hypothesis, and after careful counting of the various groups, and consideration of several passages chosen at random from various books—passages containing the same number of words I believed this cipher to contain,—I decided to assume that, as a rule, two characters represented a letter, but that occasionally, for some unexplained reason, a redundant character was used. I found that a trifle more than two-thirds of the groups contained an even number of characters; and this confirmed me in my assumption, since two-thirds was too large a percentage to occur as a mere coincidence. Now it would be but natural that the writer of this should use every endeavour to invent a cipher which should be untranslatable to the uninitiated on the one hand, and yet have, on the other hand, a key which could be remembered; for if the explanation of the system had to be reduced to writing, there would be the added danger that others might become possessed of this key, and the correlative danger that he for whom the cipher was intended might *lose* it and thus be unable to translate the document."

"There would also be the objection," the doctor interjected, "that this key would have to be used when translating, which would mean that the riddle and its answer would both be in the possession of one and the same person perhaps for a very considerable period, thus encountering additional danger of discovery."

"Exactly," Maitland continued. "We may tentatively assume, therefore, that the key is one which can easily be remembered. And here is where the personal equation comes in, and we are very materially assisted by our knowledge that 'Charlie Bert' is at the bottom of it all."

"How so?" the doctor asked.

"Why, if we did not know the cleverness of the inventor of this thing," Maitland replied, "we might fear that we were accrediting to him a degree of ability which he does not possess; but, knowing our man, we dismiss that doubt at once. Now let us turn to the paper again. We note that practically the whole keyboard of the typewriter has been called into requisition. We see also that this was written upon a Remington machine."

"You mean, I suppose, that we know that to be the typewriter operated by Charlie in the Broad Street office," said the doctor.

"More than that, Ned. I can see by the thing myself that it was printed upon a Remington. *I* know, of course, beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt, from my comparison of this document with the copy I made of it at 30 Broad Street, for Sheehan and Burke, that it was printed upon that *identical machine*, but almost *anyone* could tell it was the work of a Remington, for there is as much individuality to the different makes of typewriters as there is to the men who make them.—Observe, please, certain oft-repeated collocations of let-

ters; as, for example, 'wED' and 'xDE,' and note that the order of the letters is frequently shifted, being now 'DwE' and 'EDx' and in other groups 'DEw' and 'DxE.'

"Now, when I first noticed this I regarded these collocations as probably representing the same letter, irrespective of the order in which they are written. When I had gotten thus far I felt assured that neither alphabetical nor keyboard sequence played any part in the solution. This brought me face to face with a very important consideration, viz., whether or not keyboard *positions* might have anything to do with it. At this juncture a question came into my mind which fairly made my heart stand still for a moment. Might there not be a geometrical factor in the problem? Might not the letter intended be that produced by the key intersected by lines drawn from the keys representing the characters given? I could hardly control my impatience till I had reduced a Remington keyboard to a chart, trying different arrangements for upper and lower cases. It was no go! Still I could not get my own consent to abandon the idea. I sat thinking for a good half-hour without so much as a glint of light. Then my eyes fell upon the chart before me. Its squares, with a single character in the centre of each, at once suggested a checkerboard, and instantly, without the slightest warning, these words of mine, spoken to you long since, rang insistently through my brain; '"Charlie Bert" plays a great game of chess, Doc'! Again and again the thing resounded in my mental resonator. I could not but think that the solution of this puzzle, when found, would express itself in *terms* of *chess!* Here is my transcript of the typewriter keyboard as I arranged it in squares," Maitland continued, passing the following diagram to his friend:

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	-	
"	#	$	%	_	&	'	(	)	
q	w	e	r	t	y	u	i	o	p
Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P
a	s	d	f	g	h	j	k	l	;
A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	:
z	x	c	v	b	n	m	,	/	
Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	?	.	

"I went mentally over the moves of all the pieces till I came to the knight, when my intellectual machinery again began to run into the retrospect, and to hand me back a remark with which I had parted weeks before. '"Charlie Bert" exchanges bishops for knights!' said my phonographic repeater. '"Charlie Bert" exchanges bishops for knights!' Well, sir, the knight's move did the trick! A word will explain it. Take the first two characters of the cipher, 'A$' and locate them on the chart. Now, suppose each of these characters to be a knight, and then tell me what square they could both reach with a single knight's move."

"That marked 'W.'"

"Good! put down a cap 'W' for the first letter!" ex-

claimed Maitland. "Now proceed likewise with '18,' and what do you get?"

"I get a small 'i,'" Ned replied.

"Good again! Chalk that down and take '7f.'"

"That translates 't.'"

"And 'FI'?"

"I make that 'h.'"

"Exactly, and you have the first word—'With,'" said George.

"But some letters are represented by three characters, you said. What's that for?"

"That's merely to prevent possible error," Maitland explained. "Take the first triplet which occurs by itself,—'QE5,'—and we find its translation to be '#.' Now, if the '5' had been left off, and only 'QE' used, it might also have been 'S.' Is it clear to you?"

"Perfectly!" exclaimed the doctor. "George, 'Charlie Bert' is a most unusual personage."

"I should say he is, decidedly," responded the other. "Note some of the 'foxy' points in this thing. See how easy it is to remember the key,—you simply couldn't forget it! If you lose your chart you can make one anywhere in the civilised world by just looking up one of those typewriters. There is practically nothing to remember. Again: if you try to solve the thing by the known frequency of occurrence of the vowels of our language, you get most beautifully 'left,' by reason of the fact that the same letter may, in successive instances, be indicated by entirely different characters, or the same characters in a different arrangement. For example, '5s' is 'e' and so is '3f,' or 'Q—,' or 'T",' or any of those written in reverse order. Then, too, Doc, the thing is not what you would call immediately apparent.—But, listen to this, and see how it drives yet another nail in Bertram's coffin, and still further incriminates

the Madame, who conveyed its import to us long ago; since it shows clearly that she knew where James Moreton's body was buried. This is the translation:

"'With the northern wall of No. 163 Lombrose Street for a base line, construct a right-angled triangle whose perpendicular is twice the length of its base, and is a continuation of the western wall of No. 163. Draw a hypotenuse from the top of this perpendicular to the N. E. corner of the building. Measure from this corner up the hypotenuse 13 feet and dig.'"

"And that's the cipher?"

"That is the cipher. Now thus said the Madame," continued Maitland, reading from a paper which he had just taken from his pocket:

'"My spirit feels the torment of my body, which is rapidly being consumed. I cannot rest. They have buried me in a white hell whose invisible flames have already licked the flesh from my bones. Take pity on my wicked soul! I may not tell my murderers' names, because they meted out to me no more than I deserved. You wonder where they hid my body. Follow my directions and you shall find all that is left of it. Go to 163 Lombrose Street. Measure off upon the ground, in the exact plane of the western wall of the building, one hundred sixty feet in a northerly direction. Connect the outermost end of this line with the northeastern corner of the building. Starting at this corner lay off thirteen feet along this connecting line, and mark the spot, for there lies buried all that is left of my body! If you have pity for the wicked, oh, make haste to disinter it'!"

"There can be no doubt," said Willard, "of the connection between those two documents; the location of the grave is exactly the same in each."

"No doubt whatever," Maitland replied.

"What would Sheehan and Burke say, think you?"

"Oh! they'd say 'Charlie Bert' now, all right, for they're hot on his trail. I had to ask for the arrest of the poor fellow a great deal sooner than would otherwise have been necessary, just on their account. They were going to cut in under me, and, of course, with that reward at stake, as well as the honour of the 'Hub' which I represent, you know (though possibly you don't), I had to head them off. Charlie was a frequent visitor at the laboratory in Jersey, so all we had to do was to watch for him there, thus saving all bother of extradition."

"They will find a true bill, of course," said the doctor.

"True bill!" ejaculated his companion. "Well, I should say so! They're no good if they can't find a whole roll of 'em!"

EPISODE SEVENTH

Run to Earth

CHAPTER I

The time-honoured patriotic Americanism, "free and equal," has now assumed a specialised commercial significance, to wit: free to plunder and equal to anything.

"WELL, Eric, how goes the invention?" asked George Maitland a few weeks after the Consolidated acquired the last share of the International's stock.

Montrose replied with a disgusted look upon his face, "I should say the proper answer is 'backwards.'"

"Why, I thought everything was booming, success assured, and that you couldn't get instruments fast enough to fill orders."

"Ah, yes! it's a shameful story, and it comes as near criminal imbecility as anything can well come," replied Eric, with a deep sigh. "I am more charitable than many of my friends, who call it all a piece of arrant knavery. Of course, the result is about the same either way, for, stated in final terms, the same letters spell both 'fool' and 'knave.'"

"All this is new to me, Eric," said Maitland. "What has happened to cause this remarkable change of sentiment?"

"It's a sickening recital," replied Eric. "You know the 'hurrah-boys' aspect of things which induced the International's shareholders to 'climb over themselves' in their mad rush to exchange their holdings, share for share, for stock of the Consolidated? Well, just as soon as our stock was all exchanged, things began to lose their roseate glow. Imagine my horror when, as a director, I received a notice of a meeting

called to consider the question of changing our policy from a leasing to a selling basis."

"You don't mean that they proposed to *sell* the telephone instruments?" ejaculated Maitland.

"I do—just that——"

"—But the Bell Company? Their experience——"

"—Counted for nothing! As I'm a plundered inventor, that meeting would have been comic had it not been tragic! There we sat,—a board of presumably intelligent men, met to consider the first great question which had ever confronted us. One of our number, a Wall Street banker and multi-millionaire, was late, and we stayed proceedings till he should arrive. Well, sir, you may not believe it, but I'll swear to its literal truth, the very first thing this great financier said was: 'Gentlemen, I haven't given this matter much thought, but I've fully made up my mind which way I shall vote and I shall not change it. If there's to be any discussion, I'm ready to listen.'"

"But, Eric, how could anyone with the least sense of humour make such an absurd confession, even if it represented what he is pleased to term his 'thought'?" asked Maitland.

"You tell me!" was the laconic reply. "You know how such directors' meetings usually go? They're mere formal ratifications of what the 'powers that be' have previously cut and dried. These fellows all breathe through one pair of lungs. It's entirely a one-man affair. Why, bless you! there wasn't one solitary word of so-called argument in favour of this idiotic policy but what would have done violence to the forensic ability of a kindergarten, yet, when the question was called, mine was the only dissenting voice."

"And you think it is their intelligence rather than their morals which is diseased?" said Maitland.

"Yes, I do, really," Eric replied. "It's just the result of bad advice, I think. You see, these men are financiers, which I regard as much the same as saying that they are commercial mountebanks. For the most part they never *produce* anything, but are a kind of hold-up men, plying their much-respected trade along the byways leading from the *real* producer to the consumer. Don't misunderstand me. What I mean to say is that men may make millions gambling in wheat stocks who would be in bankruptcy in three months if they tried honestly to deal in the wheat *itself*."

"You spoke of one-man rule," said Maitland. "Who is the one man,—Adrian Moreton?"

"No! more's the pity!" exclaimed Eric. "By the way, I didn't tell you why our Wall Street banker advocated a selling basis. He said that when the phonograph came out, and he was asked to rent one, he refused to take it unless he could own it, and he thought that was precisely the way the public would regard our instrument."

"Did he say whether or not he would ride on a railroad if he couldn't own that?" laughingly enquired Maitland.

"No," replied Eric. "But to answer your question: The name of the one man who at the present moment dominates the affairs of the Consolidated is Cohen,—Solomon Cohen,—and I think I shall suggest to Dun and Bradstreet's agency that they make their ratings of houses in terms of the time it would take Solomon Cohen to bankrupt them, making the highest, say, three months and the lowest three hours. You see, he mistakes St. Vitus' Dance for genius. His method of expediting things consists in rushing in upon you and 'throwing a fit' in the most singular manner. Now he's made a success as a manufacturer of cotton cloth,

and he thinks it is due to his own exceptional business ability, when, in fact, it is chargeable more to his littleness than to his greatness. How does Solomon corral the business? By underselling his competitors. And how does he undersell? By cheapening production. And how does he cheapen production? By grinding his employees. That's his brand of 'greatness'! He will rush into the mill, where his very name is vocalised ague, and in less than a minute every poor devil is so scared that he messes everything he touches. That's the signal for this big-voiced Gargantuan inquisitor to begin his catechism. 'Quick now! what was your output last week?—What the week before?—What the week before that? Too little, far too little! Unless you can increase that five per cent. this week you may get through Saturday night!' The poor wretch adopts the pace that kills, and saves his job; and having once made the record he is ever afterward held relentlessly to it, and must never fall below it. When Cohen thinks his victim's system has 'established an endurance,' as the doctors say, he comes around and scares him up another peg. Solomon Cohen's success must all be charged up against what has been fitly called '*the social price.*' It's reciprocal is degradation, crime, disease,—death! He tries the same thing in the Consolidated, and acts as if he expected to secure outside success through internal strife. He antagonises every prospective customer, and if he really does succeed in selling an instrument, and it gets a little out of repair, he makes a belligerent enemy of our patron by informing him, in very ill-chosen language, that we've washed our hands clean of the thing, and that he may get out of his difficulty as best he can. This sort of thing has brought the Consolidated to a point where success seems all but impossible. My fellow-directors see nothing!

They're in a deep, hypnotic sleep! Solomon Cohen has but to raise that big voice of his, and at the first word—presto! every man Jack of them winks his judgment shut with a hydrogen tightness in comparison with which a clam keeps ever open house. They used to tell me what a *marvellous* thing I had accomplished in getting my invention into the hands of such *wonderful* men. They seemed to be constantly waiting, as it were, for me to issue some sort of thanksgiving proclamation,—something to be observed by fasting and prayer on my part. They are now singing another song, with Solomon as soloist and the directorate as chorus. The burden of this is that we haven't anything like the 'big thing' they thought we had; and they are learning to don a martyr-like expression intended to convey the idea that they have been egregiously deceived. They now propose to reduce the capital of the Consolidated to one million dollars, and say they will do well if they can earn dividends on that."

"Now that's what I call 'slick'!" said Maitland. "That's worthy of 'Charlie Bert.' Let me see. I buy stock in a five-million-dollar company, and then it sells out to a twenty-five-million-dollar corporation on a basis which gives me new stock of the same face-value as the old, but representing only a fifth as large a part of the whole company. And now they propose to reduce this face-value of my stock to one twenty-fifth of its present amount. Don't you call that slick, eh?"

"Let me offer you the consolation they offered me," said Eric, with a dubious shake of the head. "They begged to assure me that it was all merely a matter of figures, and that, in point of fact, I would hold, after the new deal, exactly the *same proportion* of the one-million-dollar company that I formerly held of the twenty-five-million-dollar corporation."

"As I figure it my original purchase of two thousand dollars face-value will read just a neat eighty dollars under the new deal," said Maitland thoughtfully. "Inexplicable, in good sooth, are the ways of high finance! But what says President Adrian Moreton to all this?"

"I doubt if he likes it. He has been quite blue of late, and I think this had something to do with it, though I have reason to believe he's in love,—head over heels in love! I oughtn't to know a living thing about it, but I've had the experience, and I know the symptoms."

"Who is the lady?"

"Miss Sherwood!"

"Miss Sherwood! What does Elbert say?"

"Would you mind asking him?" was the laughing reply.

"I think I'd prefer to get the information from you. If our president is in the 'dumps,' I suppose we may infer that his suit has not prospered, eh?"

"You may be sure of it," said the inventor decidedly, "though I can't say that it inevitably follows from his depressed condition. If I were Mr. Adrian Moreton's physician I should inform him that his liver divided its time between periodical strikes and feverish activity to make up for the loss occasioned thereby; with the result that he is alternately as blue as a whetstone and as gay as a lark: and I should prescribe copious draughts of thoroughwort, and—and—charge all the traffic would bear, I suppose. I don't wonder the wag answered the question, 'Is life worth living?' by saying, 'It all depends upon the liver.'"

"That's so!" laughed Maitland. "A lazy liver is the white man's real burden, Eric! But do you really think they will decrease the capitalisation of the Consolidated to one-twenty-fifth of its present sum?"

"Not a doubt of it, and we may just as well consider it already done," Eric replied. "When Solomon Cohen consents to take all his fellow-directors into his confidence, it means that his plans are secure.—I tell you what it is, George, the law which permits such outrages is the best farce ever written!"

. . . . .

An hour later George Maitland entered his friend Willard's apartment.

"When does 'Charlie Bert's' trial begin?" asked Doctor Willard.

"I expect it to be reached some time next week. The attorney-general has practically saddled the whole affair upon me, though of course he retains nominal conduct of the case, and I've had to get admitted to the New Jersey bar in addition to all the rest. To be sure, I shall have District Attorney Barton for an assistant, but he's not very well up in the case, and the attorney-general knows even less about it, and isn't doing any work on it. All his energies are being used to convict Pfeifer down there in Paterson. I appreciate his distinguished consideration, I assure you, but, in the meantime, I'm wondering how I'm going to do it all."

"Oh, you'll come out all right!" replied his friend encouragingly.—"By the way, I've a bit of news. Mrs. Moreton is to become Mrs. Eric Montrose in something like two weeks."

"I thought Eric bore the Consolidated's 'fizzle' remarkably well. This accounts for it."

"I saw Mrs. Moreton this morning," said Willard, "and she looked an angel. I may be stupid, but I can't see how it was ever possible for you to suspect that woman."

"I didn't tell you all I knew that tended to cast sus-

picion upon her," Maitland rejoined. "The will made just before the murder cut her off with little or nothing, whereas the one it was intended to replace was all 'My dearest Marie.' I learned from 'Charlie Bert' that her husband had told her of this last will just before his death.—Well, that second will disappeared in the robbery. Who was there who could possibly benefit by this disappearance? The answer is,—Mrs. Moreton. When later she herself voluntarily disclosed the existence of this second will and refused to be a beneficiary under either document, I was as much surprised as anyone could have been.—Then you must not forget the 'bad blood' between Moreton and his wife; the impending divorce suit, and that intense aversion, exhibited by each toward the other, which we so plainly observed at the little banquet given in honour of Miss Sherwood. There were, moreover, several private and apparently very important interviews between Reiss and Mrs. Moreton, one of which, she herself told me, could not wait. There were also decidedly suspicious relations between Mrs. Moreton and one Nathaniel Clarke, who was, you will remember, present at the stockholders' meeting as Martha Warren's proxy. I learned that this legal functionary and Elbert Reiss had had two men closeted with them for a considerable time just prior to the murder. My informant,—a discharged office-boy,—had overheard the names 'James Moreton,' 'Mrs. Moreton,'—and, he thought, that of 'Preece,'—mentioned several times during the interview. When the two men left he had distinctly heard his employer say to 'Preece,'—which was as near as he came to the correct name, Reiss:—'If they don't cook James Eldredge's goose to a fine rich brown, I'm no prophet!'

"This seemed to me more than ordinarily significant when taken in connection with the blood-stains

upon Reiss's vest; the marks of his fingers upon the murdered man's throat; the dagger which inflicted the death blow; his proximity to Moreton when the lights went out, and Mrs. Moreton's refusal to leave the room when White requested her to do so. Later I was able to account for all those things which made the case so strong against her. I ascertained that Nathaniel Clarke was the lawyer who had been called in by Mrs. Moreton's regular attorney, Horatio Benson, to assist him in the conduct of her divorce case. The *two men* turned out to be the gentlemen upon whom Mrs. Moreton depended to prove the very improper conduct of her lord and master upon a certain occasion when he had told her he was at a political rally. Clarke had managed Martha Warren's affairs for nearly a dozen years, so there was nothing very singular about his presence at the meeting.

"You see, Ned, why this case has been such a puzzler. In the first place there was an altogether bewildering superfluity of motive. James Moreton, or as he was quite often called, 'Dog' Moreton, was almost universally disliked, and in many cases this aversion amounted to an active, belligerent hatred. Had his brother Adrian been murdered in his place, we should have had a dearth of motive; for from what I have seen of this gentleman, he is, in character and temperament, the exact reverse of James Eldredge. I am free to admit that his gentle, sympathetic manner has attracted me not a little,—which is more than I can say with reference to his brother James."

"What do you think 'Charlie Bert's' object was in destroying that will?" asked Willard.

"His object, Ned, was to accomplish precisely what his act *did* accomplish—to cast suspicion upon Mrs. Moreton," Maitland replied. "That young man's foresight,

Doc, simply appals me. You'd expect the fellow to have made a mistake once in a while, but in every instance he seems to have weighed all the possibilities, and to have made his calculations with the nicety of a chemical balance! Oh, he's a wonder, is 'Charlie Bert'! and I have the keenest curiosity to see how he will behave in court when he discovers that at last he is run to earth."

"I suppose you have every detail of the case well in hand by this time," said the doctor. "Now what I want to know is, how did 'Charlie Bert' remove James Moreton's dead body from that room?"

"Now really, Doc, that's a little ahead of the story, and if I should tell you this now, you'd be ringing for the final curtain while you ought to be doing, say, the second act. Sardou may *write* his plays backward, Ned, but it doesn't do to *play* them that way.—Now let me tell you something which may set you thinking in a way to help me to information which I very much need, and which 'Charlie Bert' professes himself unable to supply. Just after James Moreton was murdered, his office in the Johnston Building was robbed. The evidence of wanton destruction was visible upon every hand. In 'Charlie Bert's' room, however, was a little wall-closet which apparently had not been unlocked. I asked Charlie for the key, and he said that it had been Mr. Moreton's private closet and that he had never been given a key to it. I asked him to loan me his ring of keys in order that I might see if, perchance, some of them would open it. He coloured deeply, and with apparent reluctance consented. The very first key I tried opened it 'as slick as a whistle'! and it was not a common lock either."

"And what did you find?" Ned asked.

"Oh, a lot of most interesting things, which I did not glance into at the time, owing to the officers' desire to

lock and seal the room at once. Had I then and there examined the contents of that closet, I should probably have saved myself a trip halfway around the earth. As it was, I had barely time to come within an ace of destroying one of the chief evidential values of my find before I had to leave."

"Destroying? How destroying?"

"By disturbing the order of arrangement of its various articles," Maitland quietly replied—"I wish to call your attention to this little memorandum. I carefully marked the location of this exhibit before removing it from the closet. It is in 'Charlie's Bert's' typewriting. You see, inasmuch as I'm absolutely sure of the individual machine, I am able to narrow the operators down to those having access to this particular machine, viz., Messrs. Bertram and Gates. Now, between the typewriting of these two gentlemen there is a marked difference,—that of the former checking, to a dot, with all the typewritten documents we have in hand. You see, therefore, how it is that I am able to declare that they are all the work of our clever friend, Bertram."

The doctor studied the slip a moment and then read aloud: "'et&yi)iy)qe% First rub well with a salve of pure acetic acid and lard, then with a solution of potash, and finally with hydrochloric acid.'"

"Why, I should say it was a recipe of some kind. What more can you make of it?"

"Precious little, I confess," replied Maitland. "Now, applying the key which we found to unlock your 'typewriter nightmare' so prettily, we get as a translation of the first twelve characters the number '5883.'"

"I don't see anything especially significant about that."

"But I do! It is likely to turn out to be one of the very strongest bits of evidence we have against

'Charlie Bert,' and heaven knows! that's saying a great deal; for the poor fellow is already buried deep beneath a veritable evidential mountain. Now there is not one chance in a thousand that these twelve initial characters require, for their translation, any other key than that which we have already applied to our cryptogram. You and I know perfectly well that all this is 'Charlie Bert's' handiwork,—and it's mighty handy work, too!—but we have to consider how those facts which have determined *our* convictions will affect a jury. Now, while I expect to be able to convince the jury that all our typewritten exhibits were, beyond any reasonable doubt, printed upon the identical machine now in the Broad Street office, I do not anticipate exactly an easy conquest when I attempt to show that they are undoubtedly in 'Charlie Bert's' typewriting. You see, Ned, the evidence which proves this latter point is such as appeals more strongly to experts than to such laymen as will be reasonably certain to comprise the jury. If, however, I can connect this recipe with our cryptogram, beyond all cavil, do you not see how, in view of the fact that the document in your hand was not only written upon the typewriter to which Bertram had access, but was found in the office where he worked, securely locked in a closet to which he had the key,—do you not see, I repeat, how easily I shall be able to show the jury what you and I already know,—that in 'Charlie Bert' we have the king-pin of this whole intricate and beautiful criminal mechanism,—beautiful, even as a cancer is beautiful?"

"I understand you now," said the doctor. "What you want is to be able to prove that those twelve characters were intended to represent the figures '5883.'"

"Precisely," replied his companion; "and in order to do so, we must learn what relation these figures bear

to the rest of the recipe. Personally, I'm afraid it's the number of some druggist's prescription,—some fellow, perhaps, who has been taught just how to compound the stuff. If so, we've a job on our hands to find the druggist without advertising."

"But why not advertise?" asked the doctor.

"Because in playing chess with a fellow like 'Charlie Bert' every pawn counts," George replied. "I'm not giving that astute young man any unnecessary information. By the way, Doc, speaking of Charlie,—are you aware that he uses carpenters' tools with the same skill with which he wields the scalpel? You should see some of his work over at 163 Lombrose Street. It would astonish you."

"But when did he get time to do all this?" asked the doctor.

"While his employer was chasing after Miss Marion Sherwood as she went from city to city with her company, and I was trying in vain day after day to find him at his office. Not that he made his presence known to the lady—far from it! Reiss was painting her portrait for 'The Odeon,' and was accordingly with her a good deal of the time, so that James Eldredge, jealous as a Barbary pigeon, had to be content with witnessing her performances from some obscure corner of the theatre. Now, while this lovesick gentleman ran up and down the land like a 'lobster,'—which is to say, with a lady enthroned deep in his innermost being,—'Charlie Bert' 'struck work' at the office early every afternoon, and he didn't always go home nights. This gave him an abundance of time, and he made good use of it, as you will see."

"But how did he fix it so as to get the corpse out of the room while we all stood in the hall? That's what I want to know," protested the doctor.

"You are well aware of Charlie's great strength, I believe?" said Maitland.

"I am," replied Willard.

"What would you think," George asked, "if I should tell you that Charlie took the corpse in his arms, and walked *right out of the room and down the stairs with it?*"

"Think!" exclaimed the doctor. "I should think you were stark, staring mad!"

"It's all right, Doc; I only wanted to know," was the laughing rejoinder.

CHAPTER II

Calamities are ever prone to acquire the gregarious habit, and to visit their victim in droves. Through the breach one sorrow makes troop many more.

THE morning set down for the trial of Charles Bertram, in the Court of Oyer and Terminer for Hudson County, N. J., has arrived. Judges Clapp, Garrett, Branley and West are to sit in the case. The counsel are as follows: Attorney-General Arthur T. Stockton, District Attorney John P. Barton and George Maitland for the State, Henry Plaisted and James Emery Storrow for the defence.

Such is the public's interest in this mysterious case that long before ten o'clock, the hour set for the opening of the Court, every available place is occupied. There are many familiar faces. Inside the bar are Mrs. Hortense Moreton, Miss Marion Sherwood, Miss Rachel Eichberg, Madame Duval, Madame La Salle, and Messrs. Willard, Reiss, Carew, Montrose, Cohen, Gates, Draper, Clarke, Perry, Wister, Bartlett, Belcher, Moreton, Sheehan, Burke, Chalmers, Lorraine, Bowman, Wilkes, Knapp, Small, Rice and Sanderson.

The first-mentioned lady and the twelve gentlemen first named were, it will be remembered, actual eye-witnesses to all that occurred at the now famous stockholders' meeting of June 13th previous to the instant when the lights were extinguished.

The prisoner is pale, very quiet, and apparently cool and collected. He bears himself manfully. A close observer might detect, ever and anon, a faint flush of colour stealing in a little red wave from his neck up-

ward to his forehead, and an occasional unequal dilation of the pupils of his eyes. His knitted brow betokens a determined concentration which he who runs may read.

The general panel is now called by the clerk, during which there is an earnest consultation between the counsel on both sides and the judges. As the clerk finishes Judge Clapp says: "Is the State ready to move the indictment?"

"Yes, sir," answers Mr. Barton.

"Is the defence ready?"

"Yes, sir," replies Mr. Storrow.

Six challenges are allowed on each side. James Cogan is the first juror called. Charles Bertram whispers to Mr. Storrow, who challenges Cogan.

Isaac Huber is then accepted and becomes foreman. Two other jurors,—Alvin Jones and Carl Hermann,—are challenged by the defence and are set aside.

Osric Lundell asks to be excused and his request is granted. The State challenges only one man, Alton H. Gates, who is set aside. In ten minutes the jury is complete. In five minutes more it is polled and the trial begins.

District Attorney Barton opens the case. He is a tall, spare man, with a student's stoop to his shoulders; a shock of hair, not altogether unlike that of Rufus Choate, yet more so than its owner could wish; sallow, parchment-like skin; a little, closely trimmed, fiercely black moustache, every treacherous hair of which is scandalously confidential just where it enters the skin; high cheek-bones; deeply set grey eyes; wide, thin-lipped mouth; great breadth of shoulders; and big, flat, trowel-like feet.

His voice, as he begins his address, is loud and full, but lacks that subtle charm of modulation and inflection

which is to human utterance what the throb is to the violin tone.

"The State has a most marvellous case to present to you: a case which is without parallel in the history of this State, and I do not believe its like is to be found anywhere under the vault of heaven. We have on trial a man whose position of trust, if nothing else, should have rendered impossible the crime with which he is charged.

"The confidence reposed in him, the kind and generous treatment he received from his employer, should have met with more than ordinary gratitude; yet we find it our duty to press this trial, and to do what we can to bring to justice the chief perpetrator of this awful crime of treachery, ingratitude and blood. The Grand Jury, after diligent search, made a presentment of Charles Bertram for the murder of James Eldredge Moreton, and have caused the presentment to be endorsed 'a true bill' by their foreman. They must have examined the case with great care, and upon their finding the case must be tried.

"On the thirteenth day of last June, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, James Eldredge Moreton, a well-known New York financier, was stabbed to death at No. 163 Lombrose Street, this city, in the actual presence of his wife and some fifteen or so fellow-stockholders and proxies. The crime, by accident as well as by intent, is in its weird singularity all but utterly unbelievable. Imagine, if you please, a large rectangular room in which certain shareholders and proxies are assembled to participate in a stockholders' meeting of The International Wireless Telephone Company, called for 3 P. M. Just as the hour arrives an altercation occurs over a proxy held by one John White, since deceased. Instantly the gathering splits into two factions

captained respectively by John White and James Eldredge Moreton.

"Calling upon his followers to help him clear the room, and singling Moreton out for himself, John White rushes upon his enemy. Before he can pass the desk which separates him from Moreton a pistol shot is heard close at hand, and instantly the room is plunged in darkness. For a brief moment Mr. Moreton is heard to cry out against his assailant; then there is a heavy fall! The lady—the victim's wife!—calls upon someone to light a match. Several of the men, brought back to their senses by this woman's presence of mind, hastily comply, and one lights a candle which is upon the desk. There are two physicians present. One of them seizes the candle and holds it over a prostrate form upon the floor. It is James Eldredge Moreton lying with his face upturned and with a stiletto driven almost to its hilt straight through his heart! The weapon is still in the wound! Gentlemen, I need not go into any minute details. Everything will be made clear to you by the evidence. Almost immediately everyone leaves the room; the door is locked on the outside; and all, with the exception of the three gentlemen who go in pursuit of the supposed accomplice, await the arrival of the medical examiner and the officers of the law, in the hall, directly in front of the only entrance to the room in which the corpse lies! When, a few minutes later, the medical examiner arrives and enters the room, it is discovered that the corpse has been removed!"

This announcement by the District Attorney creates a profound sensation, for this is the first time this astonishing fact has been given to the public. Heretofore, through the strenuous efforts of George Maitland, this particular phase of the case has been kept a profound secret. The newspaper accounts of the "gruesome find"

in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street had, of course, given the public to understand that the murdered man's body had in some mysterious way vanished, but they had left their readers guessing both as to when and how this astonishing disappearance had been effected, and who could possibly have guessed that the theft occurred at the very moment when so many people stood guard before the only door of the room where the victim's body lay!

"Yes, Gentlemen of the Jury," Mr. Barton continues; "in spite of the indubitable fact that the room in which the murder was committed is without windows or outlets of any kind, save the one door before which not less than a dozen persons stand from the very moment they leave the corpse until the arrival of the medical examiner, that gentleman no sooner enters the room than he discovers that the murdered man's body has been removed in some utterly inexplicable manner!

"This, Gentlemen of the Jury, is a hasty glance at but a mere fragment, albeit a central fragment, of a case which is destined to live in the annals of criminology as the most daring, inexplicable, outré and successful crime ever committed. We believe the evidence will fully convince you, as it has us, that the prisoner we have brought to the bar of justice, exhibited, in the conception of this crime, an intellectual ability and steadfastness of purpose little short of marvellous, and, we believe, quite impossible for anyone not at the time in a condition of *full mental and moral responsibility.* I say, 'at the time,' for the reason that the prosecution is quite aware that there have been periods during which the prisoner suffered some degree of mental alienation. We shall show you, by proof which cannot be gainsaid, that the crime was planned many, many months before its commission, and that these elaborate preparations

were followed out with a detail and a skill which cannot fail to challenge your admiration. We shall show you how, on the very night of the murder, the victim's office at No. 30 Broad Street, New York, was entered, and its safe rifled of a large sum of money; and we shall put before you evidence which has convinced us beyond a peradventure that Charles Bertram was the central figure and dominating spirit of this daring robbery. When you have become familiar with the case, you cannot, we believe, fail to detect his delicate, subtle, Machiavelian hand it its every detail. I have referred to the prisoner as 'the central figure and dominating spirit' of this robbery, for the reason that the prosecution is perfectly well aware that no one man committed either the murder or the robbery. No, Gentlemen of the Jury, the prisoner, if guilty, was assisted by at least one accomplice in the murder, and by not less than two in the robbery, and you will please not assume, from the fact that the State has thought best to proceed first against the man whom it is forced to regard as the principal in these crimes, that it is destitute of evidence against the accessories. In first attempting to ascertain and convict the head and front of these terrible outrages, the prosecution believes it is adopting the course best calculated to safeguard public interest, and you may rest upon our assurance that the small fry will lose themselves in the blood of the big fish. Although the prisoner at the bar is not at present on trial for the robbery, which occurred in another State, the two crimes are so intimately interwoven, the one forming the dominant motive for the other, that the prosecution feels constrained to contend that, in order to show sufficiency of motive for the killing of James Eldredge Moreton, it must not only offer evidence as to the previous defalcations, but also as to the subsequent robbery; since, if it be held that there is a reason-

able doubt of the prisoner's having committed or benefited by either of these crimes, the defence will have succeeded in discrediting, to a great degree, that which the prosecution now regards as a sufficiency of motive for this whole criminal chain—a chain, Gentlemen, whose first links are the series of defalcations begun many months ago, and whose ending loop is the robbery of James Moreton's office in the Johnston Building, upon the very night of his murder."

During these remarks Charles Bertram sits as pale and rigid as marble, with his unfathomable eyes fastened upon the District Attorney. He does not seem either to wink or breathe. Twice, during his discourse, Mr. Barton gets entangled with this rapier-like gaze in a way that temporarily disconcerts him, and causes him to lose the thread of his argument, after which experiences he takes good care to keep his eyes off the prisoner.

"We shall further show you, Gentlemen of the Jury," continues the District Attorney, "what disposition was made of the murdered man's body; how, with a cleverness which speaks volumes for the intellectual acumen of the guilty party, the seemingly impossible was achieved. We shall explain to you how the corpse was removed without detection from the room in which the murder was committed, and how it was buried in quicklime just back of the building. Much that we shall put before you will of necessity be circumstantial, yet it is primary evidence,—the very best of which the nature of the case admits,—and we beg you to remember, in this connection, the words of Blackstone,—'But next to positive proof, circumstantial evidence, or the doctrine of presumptions, must take place.'"

. . . . .

As the District Attorney concludes his opening re-

marks the general panel is discharged until Thursday morning, and the Court announces that no other cause would be taken up previous to that time. The rest of the day is consumed in the purely formal establishment of the *corpus delicti*. When the prosecution has adduced what it considers sufficient evidence to prove, beyond a peradventure, what everybody admitted before,—viz., that a murder has been committed,—the Court adjourns for the day.

. . . . .

Upon the opening of the Court the next morning every available place was taken, and at least a hundred persons who desired to be present at the trial were obliged to forego that pleasure from lack of standing room.

Mr. George Maitland began the examination of the State's witnesses.

Mr. Henry Gates was the first to take the stand.

The part of his testimony essential to this narrative was as follows:

Q. What is your occupation?

A. I am a bookkeeper.

Q. Are you at present employed?

A. No, sir.

Q. Where were you last employed?

A. At 30 Broad Street, in the offices of Mr. James Moreton.

Q. As bookkeeper?

A. Yes, sir; assistant bookkeeper.

Q. Who was the head bookkeeper?

A. Mr. Charles Bertram.

Q. How long have you known Mr. Bertram?

A. Ever since I went to work for Mr. Moreton, nearly three years ago.

Q. Has there ever been any friction between you and Mr. Bertram?

A. No, sir; not to my knowledge. We have always been good friends.

Q. When working for Mr. Moreton, were your duties confined entirely to bookkeeping?

A. No, sir. Mr. Bertram and I divided the general duties of the office, though he usually attended to most of the correspondence.

Q. Were you enabled to keep in touch with the business of the office?

A. Yes, sir; it was my duty to index the letter-books, and I had free access to the letter-files. Some of the letters I printed myself. Nearly all of them I copied.

Q. Then Mr. Moreton did not use the detached-sheet-carbon-copy filing system now so common?

A. No, sir; we used the letterpress.

Q. Were your relations with your employer pleasant?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What do you know about Mr. Bertram's relations with Mr. Moreton?

A. They were always pleasant, so far as I observed.

Q. Are you aware that there are grave discrepancies in Mr. Bertram's accounts?

A. Yes, sir; that is—I have been so informed.

Q. But did you not, as assistant bookkeeper, have access to these same accounts?

A. Yes,—yes, sir; I did, but——

Q. But what?

A. But—I—I'm not an expert accountant.

Q. Did you detect anything out of the way in these accounts?

A. No, sir; nothing whatever.

Q. Do you remember the Haswell transaction?

A. Yes, sir, perfectly.

Q. What was the amount due Mrs. Haswell from Mr. Moreton?

A. $409,500.

Q. Was that sum ever paid?

A. No, sir; it was lost in the robbery.

Q. Tell me what leads you to infer this.

A. About two weeks before Mr. Moreton's death he received a letter from Mrs. Haswell's attorney demanding payment. This was just after he had plunged heavily in the stock-market and "made" some big losses. I remember the occurrence perfectly, because at the time Mr. Bertram and I discussed the matter, and he asked me what I thought Mr. Moreton would do about it.

Q. Do you know how much available cash Mr. Moreton had at that time?

A. He had less than $20,000 on deposit when the letter came.

Q. How, then, did he lose some four hundred odd thousand dollars in the robbery?

A. This was two weeks before the robbery, and within the next three days he got the market where he wanted it, and made a clean half a million. All but about a hundred thousand dollars of this remained on deposit, up to the day of the murder, when $409,500 was withdrawn by Mr. Moreton and placed in the safe, leaving a little less than $10,000 still on deposit.

Q. Did you see this money placed in the safe?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How did Mr. Moreton bring the money from the banks?

A. In a leather bag.

Q. Did he put this in the safe?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Then you did not see the contents of the bag?

A. Yes, sir. Mr. Moreton started to take the money out of the bag and pack it in the drawers of the safe, but there were three packets more than they would hold,

so he changed his mind and put it all back into the bag, and crowded the whole business into one of the big, vertical compartments intended for books.

Q. Could you form any estimate of how much money there was in all?

A. I counted sixteen big packages and one small one. The big packets were labelled $25,000 each. I did not notice what was on the small bundle.

Q. And all this went into the safe?

A. Yes, sir; all of it.

Q. Was there anyone else in the office at the time?

A. Yes, sir. Mr. Bertram was there.

Q. Did he see the money?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you have the combination of the safe?

A. No, sir; I never opened it.

Q. Who opened it mornings?

A. Mr. Bertram usually did.

Q. And when he didn't?

A. Mr. Moreton opened it.

Q. What happened after the money was put into the safe and the safe locked?

A. We all three left for the stockholders' meeting.

Q. Where were you on the night of February 22d of last year?

A. I—I don't—I don't think I can remember.

Q. Try again! There's no hurry. Washington's birthday, you know.

The face of the witness turned ashen, then crimson, and then ashen again. The spectators noticed his confusion and awaited his answer breathlessly. After a long pause Mr. Gates replied:

A. I think Mr. Bertram and I were entertaining some ladies until quite late that night.

Q. Where?

A. At—at—here in Jersey City.

Q. Yes, I know; but whereabouts in Jersey City?

Again the witness paused and seemed to cast about for some evasive reply. Finding nothing to his liking, he answered doggedly:

A. At 163 Lombrose Street.

Q. In the room where James Moreton was murdered?

A. In the room on the—yes, sir; the room in which Mr. Moreton was killed.

This announcement created quite a little sensation, the effect being caused more by the witness's manner than by his admission.

Q. Who was there, upon that occasion, besides yourself and Mr. Bertram?

A. There were two ladies, sir.

Q. Will you give me their names, please?

A. I would—I would much prefer to spare them this publicity.

Q. The matter is of sufficient importance to warrant me in insisting. What were their names?

Again a pallor as of death overspread the witness's face.

A. Miss Eichberg and Madame Duval.

At the mention of these names there was an excited rustle all over the court room.

Q. What were these ladies doing there?

A. They were just there at our invitation.

Q. Exactly; but why did you invite them?

A. I—we—that is—Mr. Bertram—it was a holiday, and Mr. Bertram suggested a game of cards and a little supper by way of celebration.

Q. Did Mr. Moreton know of this?

A. Oh, no, sir! Mr. Moreton was out of town. We never went there in this way when he was in New York.

Q. Why was that?

A. We were afraid—afraid he might drop in on us.

Q. Wasn't that rather a singular fear?

A. No, sir; we regarded it as very natural.

Q. Indeed! You must have had some special reason, then, for this view. Suppose you explain.

A. Mr. Moreton was having domestic troubles at this time, and I do not think he went home one night a week on the average. Sometimes he'd go to the theatre, and then take a room at a hotel; sometimes he'd go over to 163 and spend the night; and sometimes he'd go elsewhere, but very rarely did he go home. While 163 was being fitted up for The International Wireless, he often spent the night there, laying out the next day's work for the carpenters. We never felt sure, therefore, of not being interrupted, unless he were out of town.

Q. Was not Mr. Moreton out of town a good deal about this time?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know where he went?

A. I know some of the places.

Q. Please name them.

A. Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Buffalo, Albany and, I think, Rochester. He went also to other places, but either I did not know them at the time or have since forgotten them.

In the main, Mr. Gates seemed a very willing witness, and created a decidedly favourable impression.

Q. Were you and Mr. Bertram at 163 Lombrose Street on the nights of March 2d, 3d, 5th, 10th, 13th, 15th and 16th, and of April 3d, 7th and 11th?

A. A—n—no—that is—I should say—I could not—I don't remember!

Q. We will drop the dates. Were you not at that address during March and April something like ten nights?

A. I—we went—we were there a number of times, along about that time.

Q. Were the same two ladies always with you?

A. Oh, no, sir! they were never there except on special occasions.

Q. What do you mean by "special occasions"?

A. Times when we celebrated a bit—got up a little supper,—a cold chicken and a bottle,—something of that sort.

Q. At other times you and Mr. Bertram were alone, were you?

A. Not usually; sometimes.

Q. Why did you go there?

A. To have a little game of poker. It was an out-of-the-way place and, there being no windows in the room, the lights didn't attract outside attention.

Q. Ah, I see! You gambled there, then?

A. Well, there was usually enough up to make it interesting.

(The witness smiled mysteriously as he said this.)

Q. And you slept there on these occasions?

A. What sleep we got, we got there,—that is, Mr. Bertram and I,—the rest usually left somewhere about midnight.

Q. Did you have a key to the outside and the inside door, or either of them?

A. No, sir; Mr. Bertram had these.

Q. Then you never went there except in his company?

A. No, sir; not at night.

Q. Did he ever go there except in your company?

A. Yes, sir—that is, I suppose so—really I don't know—perhaps not—I couldn't say.

At this point the Court adjourned for the day.

. . . . .

That night a black-bordered letter having a foreign

postmark and addressed "Mr. Adrian Canova Moreton, care of Dr. Henry Forsythe Carew," etc., was placed in Mr. Moreton's hands. He trembled visibly as he broke the seal. It was from his sister and ran as follows:

"Venice, March 23, 19—.

"DEAR ADRIAN: Try to bear manfully the burden I am about to lay upon you. Ours is a thrice-stricken family. Our dear mother passed away yesterday at about noon. She died of the malady which had afflicted her for so many years. You know how it has been ever since father was killed. I had hoped that the change back to the old familiar scenes of her childhood might have a good effect upon her, and for a little while I think it did. Then she took to brooding over father's death, and seemed to connect every familiar object with him. Ever since his assassination she has regarded her life as an exile to which she has prayed that death might put a speedy end. This, dear brother, and the knowledge that she is once more with father, should temper your grief with rejoicing even as it has tempered mine. For one thing I shall never cease to be thankful. Mother died in ignorance of James's awful fate. Your letter from New Zealand was the first intimation I had of James's murder, for Dr. Carew did not ascertain our address till long after your letter reached me. For several hours I was completely prostrated by the terrible news. Fortunately, mother was away at the time, and before she returned I had regained my self-control. She had been feebler than usual for several days, and I dared not break the news to her till she should, in a measure, regain her strength. In this way the evil tidings were postponed from time to time, so that she was providentially spared the great pain they would have caused her,—for which God be praised! It was so much better that she should first learn the truth by meeting James with father upon the other side!

"You may expect to see me soon, as I shall take mother's body home with me as soon as everything can be put in readiness. Good-bye, brother, till then! Be brave, dear Adrian, and be assured you have a sister's sympathy, in this, our dark hour of affliction! I long to see you, for we are all in all to each other now,—the last of our line. Alas! I had all but forgotten to tell you how it happened that I was not with mother when she died.

"We have been staying in the Palazzo Vendramini for some weeks now. Yesterday, about noon, while I was reading to mother in our room, the maid came to the door and told her a gentleman, who declined to give his name, wished to see her in the parlour. Mother said: 'It's some one of our Washington friends, Lucia, and you may be sure he'll want to see you,' and left the room.

"I thought so, too, and waited expecting momently to be called. That was the last I saw of mother alive. A few minutes later I heard a commotion in the hall and went to the door. The maid was hurrying toward me wringing her hands, and behind her was a tall, elderly gentleman bearing mother in his arms. He laid her gently upon the bed, and seemed deeply moved. He said he had known mother as a child, and that he had wished to see if she would recognise him. She had forgotten him, he said, and so, to refresh her memory, he had shown her a little design tattooed into his left forearm. She had no sooner seen it, he said, than she sprang to her feet, and he saw at once that she was very ill. He rushed forward to assist her, but she went from one convulsion into another, and before he could summon aid, fell, a limp mass, in his arms.

"I was stunned, stupefied, bereft of reason! I knew not what to do or say. Vaguely I heard, as if from a great distance, the old gentleman's words: 'If I can be of any service, pray don't hesitate to call upon me. Everybody about here knows me. Ask for Captain Paolo Orsini.'

"I made no reply, and he left the room. I could not speak; I could not think; I could not even feel! I was dumb, dazed, numb!

"The excitement,—the nervous shock caused by so suddenly meeting with an old friend,—precipitated the fatal attack.

"Let us try to rejoice that mother is free of her heavy burden, even though it has fallen upon our shoulders.

"Good-bye, and God bless and guard you——!

"Your loving sister,

"LUCIA."

CHAPTER III

Inventors were originated for the sole purpose of being robbed, and no well-organised, financial thinking-bulb will ever lose sight of this genetic fact. Every inventor should ruthlessly be stripped by commercial idiots or knaves—it really doesn't matter which—of the dear fruits of his life's toil and struggle till he stand naked in absolute beggary. This creditably accomplished, he should then in the prurient interests of modesty, be clothed with abuse, covered with contumely, and bound about with little surgical, riband-like strips of his own reputation, carefully shredded for the purpose. God of us all! Can Moneybags be expected to stop with his life? Shall he not have his soul also?

THE third day's trial of Charles Bertram showed no abatement of interest upon the part of the spectators. In most murder cases, the *main* interest ceases once the real culprit is known to be in the hands of the law; but such was not true of the trial of Charles Bertram for the killing of James Eldredge Moreton. No sooner did the public satisfy itself that Bertram was the principal in the atrocious crimes which had been committed, than it found, in the apparent impossibilities which the murderer had overcome, an even greater stimulus to its curiosity. The trial was resumed with Henry Gates still on the stand.

Q. You have testified to a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Mr. Bertram. What outside interests has he —I mean, what interests apart from his business?

A. He is very fond of sports. He has taken several prizes in amateur athletics, and has won three semi-professional chess-tournaments.

Q. Is that all?

A. N—no, sir. He is also quite a student of—of anatomy, and is, I believe, considered to possess rather a remarkable surgical ability.

Q. By "surgical ability" do you mean mere technical knowledge, or manipulative dexterity?

A. Both. He has frequently assisted in operations in major surgery.

Q. Have you ever seen any exhibitions of manual dexterity on his part, along other than surgical lines?

A. Oh, yes, sir!

Q. Please name them.

A. He can handle a pack of cards like a professional magician,—in fact, he is the only person I have ever seen who can make the *single-handed pass* in full view, without detection. I have seen him place the joker upon the top of a euchre pack and deal out four hands, avoiding this top card every time, and finally dealing it to himself as his last card, without the others having the slightest suspicion that anything unfair was occurring. He has also a considerable degree of skill in wood-carving, and has done some excellent cabinet work. He is very handy with all kinds of tools.

Q. Did he ever do any dissecting on his own account?

A. I—I don't—he may—yes, sir.

Q. What did he dissect?

A. Various animals.

Q. Did he ever, in this way, dissect the human animal?

The witness turned very pale at this question, and looked helplessly toward the prisoner. He remained dumb, as if unable to speak, and Maitland repeated the question.

Q. Did he ever, in this way, dissect the human animal?

Every eye in the court room fastened itself upon the prisoner. By a species of divination which the spectators themselves could not have explained, each felt that

this question was charged with great significance. The witness's voice faltered as he made answer.

A. I—I—think he did—y-yes, sir.

Q. Do you not know that he did?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did he not do this on more than one occasion?

A. Y-yes, sir.

Q. Where did he get these cadavers?

Had the question been a thunderbolt it could scarcely have produced a more terrifying effect upon the witness. His face assumed the colour of mildewed lead, his knees knocked together, and he seized the railing of the witness-stand for support. The room was as still as the grave. It was fully half a minute before Mr. Gates spoke, and then it was not to Maitland. He looked helplessly at the judges and asked:

"Can I be compelled to give evidence which may be used against me?"

This question created a visible sensation.

"You are not obliged to testify to anything which will incriminate yourself," said the Court.

Maitland promptly abandoned this part of the inquiry.

Q. In what branches of athletics does Mr. Bertram chiefly excel?

A. In those requiring great strength.

Q. Did you ever see him place the palms of his hands beneath the elbows of a man, raise him from the floor, and carry him across the room in this fashion, without hurry, or any other external evidence of great effort?

A. Yes, sir. That was one of his commonest "stunts" at the gymnasium.

Q. Can you form any idea of how heavy a man he could handle in this way?

A. I saw one man weighed after he had carried him

thirty feet. He tipped the scales at one hundred ninety-three pounds seven ounces.

Q. When you went to 163 Lombrose Street, you have said Mr. Bertram unlocked both the outside and inside doors.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did he also have keys to the desk and wardrobe?

A. He had a key to the desk which he used on one occasion. I could not say about the wardrobe, as it was always unlocked when I was there.

Q. In the office formerly occupied by yourself and Mr. Bertram in the suite at 30 Broad Street there is, if I remember, a little fire-proof wall-closet something less than three feet square. Do you remember this?

A. I remember there is such a closet. I have seen Mr. Moreton and Mr. Bertram go to it once or twice.

Q. Then Mr. Bertram had a key to it?

A. Yes, sir—that is—I don't know—I suppose so.

Q. Do you know what was kept in that closet?

A. No, sir; I was not supposed to go there.

Q. You operate the typewriter, I believe.

A. A little; yes, sir.

Q. What machines have you used?

A. The Caligraph and the Remington. I am not a Caligraph operator, however, as I have never learned its keyboard; nor have I had practice enough on the Remington to become at all rapid, for Mr. Bertram always did the great bulk of the office typewriting.

Q. Where did you first use the Caligraph?

A. In Mr. Moreton's office.

Q. Is the Caligraph regarded at present as a standard machine?

A. I do not think so.

Q. How do you account for it, then, that Mr. Moreton,

with his well-known desire to have the best of everything, kept this machine in his office?

A. The Caligraph has an arrangement of keyboard and a staccato touch peculiar to itself. Mr. Moreton had learned these before he came to New York, and was quite a rapid operator. Some of his correspondence was of such a nature that he would not even entrust it to Mr. Bertram, preferring to write it himself. He kept the Caligraph, therefore, rather than learn a new keyboard.

Q. But he finally changed to a Remington, did he not?

A. Yes, sir; when the Caligraph got so badly out of repair that he was afraid its work would disgrace him.

Q. Did Mr. Bertram operate the Caligraph?

A. Yes, sir. He became very proficient upon it.

Q. When did Mr. Moreton change to the Remington?

A. Somewhere about a year before his death, if I remember.

Q. Did Mr. Bertram become proficient upon this machine also?

A. Yes, sir. He wrote very rapidly, frequently taking slow dictation direct upon the machine.

Q. Did he do all of the office typewriting?

A. No, sir; not all. I did a very little and Mr. Moreton did some himself. I never learned to write fast on either machine, but Mr. Moreton and Mr. Bertram were quite expert on both of them.

Q. Immediately after the murder of Mr. Moreton, Dr. Edward Willard and Charles Bertram left 163 Lombrose Street. Did you accompany them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I have been informed that almost as soon as you had all left the premises, you and Mr. Bertram detached yourselves from Dr. Willard. Is this true?

A. It is true that we separated.

Q. I have here a typewritten letter addressed to Mr. James Moreton and signed "Nemesis." It is dated the twentieth of December,—almost exactly six months before his murder. Can you tell me if Mr. Moreton was in the city at that time?

The witness thought for a moment and then replied:

A. No, sir; I do not think he was. If I remember, he was feeling blue at that time, and took a run down to the "American Monte Carlo," as he called it, where he dropped some thousands of dollars.

Q. Do you mean that he took a trip down to Palm Beach?

A. Yes, sir. He got back just in time to spoil our New-Year's celebration. That's how I remember it so distinctly.

Q. You had planned another little affair over in 163, I take it.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did Mr. Moreton make any secret of the fact that he had been down to Palm Beach?

A. No, sir; I think not,—that is, at least, not in the office. He said to Mr. Bertram in my presence, the very day of his return: "You think, Bertram, that we fellows on the Exchange are a pretty tough gang of pirates, but if you'll just take a little trip down on the Florida east coast, and see how the people down there fleece the innocent tourist, you'll feel like going right up to Tiffany's and ordering diamond halos, inscribed with 'Truth' and 'Honesty,' for our whole outfit"!

Q. You are positive, then, that Mr. Moreton was away on December 20th?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did Mr. Moreton tell you anything about losing any valuables shortly before his murder?

A. Y-yes, sir.

Q. Relate what you know about this.

A. The day before the murder he sent me over to the laboratory. He was robbed while I was away. He said that Mr. Bertram had stepped out, saying he was going to the vault, and, that while he was gone, feeling a bit fagged out, he had stretched himself upon the sofa to rest. He was sure it was about three o'clock. He told me that he had had a vague sensation of suffocation, accompanied by a peculiar odour which might or might not have been chloroform; he could not say. When he came to himself he discovered that he had been relieved of several valuable articles. His left hand, he said, was bleeding, and he told me that the robber had dipped his finger in the blood and hastily drawn with it the mysterious figure mentioned in his brother's letters, upon his,—Mr. Moreton's,—forehead.

Q. Do you know what articles Mr. Moreton lost upon this occasion?

A. No, sir. I asked him, but he declined to tell me. He said that he had been a fool to allow himself literally to be "caught napping"; and that he did not wish me to say anything about it outside of the office. A man in his position could not, he said, afford to publish himself as so "easy a mark," and he would much prefer taking his medicine in silence to becoming a laughing stock for his enemies.

Q. Did Mr. Moreton wear, at the stockholders' meeting, the gold watch which he commonly carried?

A. No, sir. He wore a silver one.

Q. Please look at the peculiar figure upon this letter, and tell me if you have ever seen it before.

(Maitland handed the witness the letter dated December 20th, and pointed with his finger to the Sign of the Thirteen near the signature. Gates glanced casually at it and replied without hesitation:)

A. Oh, yes, sir! many times. It is the sign for which Mr. Adrian Moreton cautioned his brother to be on the lookout. We saw it in one of his letters.

Q. Did Mr. Bertram see it?

A. Yes, sir. It was he who first called my attention to it.

Q. Will you please remove your coat and bare your left forearm?

(The prisoner did as requested and exhibited, to the astonishment of the jury, as well as to that of the spectators,—the Sign of the Thirteen neatly tattooed into his flesh. Maitland continued his question.)

Why did you have that figure placed there?

A. Mr. Bertram "stumped" me to do it. He said he'd have it put on his arm if I would on mine.

Q. And did he?

A. Yes, sir.

This strange bit of testimony created a profound impression on the spectators. Why, they asked themselves, should a murderer so astute as Charles Bertram first indelibly brand himself with a hieroglyph, and then, upon every possible occasion, connect the same figure with the atrocious crime he was planning? Why, indeed?

This finished Maitland's examination of Henry Gates, and, to the surprise of everyone, the defence declined to cross-examine him.

Officers Sheehan and Burke were called, in the order named, and told their stories. The defence cross-examined neither of them.

The State then called Milton Small, who testified, as an expert accountant, that he had examined Mr. Bertram's books and found deficits aggregating nearly sixty thousand dollars.

The defence made no objection to the introduction of

this testimony, neither did they cross-examine the witness, and it looked to the spectators as if the prosecution were having rather an easy time of it.

Mrs. Hortense Marie Moreton was then placed upon the stand. She testified to much with which the reader already is familiar. She said her husband had at first been very devoted to her. He had made his will entirely in her favour, and had showered upon her all manner of gifts, among them a valuable locket containing a lock of his hair. This the witness exhibited, and the prosecution offered it in evidence. Mrs. Moreton further testified that her husband had instituted divorce proceedings against her, and had, shortly before his death, shown her a new will in which she played but a small part. She was then excused. The defence again refrained from cross-examination.

Just as the audience was beginning to lose a measure of its excitement, George Maitland said:

"Mr. Adrian Canova Moreton will please take the stand."

In an instant everyone was on the *qui vive*. This was the murdered man's brother! He was in New Zealand when the crime was committed! What could the prosecution expect to prove by him? What was the matter with his face? Were those tattoo marks? How did he come by them? These and scores of similar remarks at once began to circulate among the spectators in whispers which had to be gavelled into silence.

Mr. Moreton's testimony was far more dramatic than the audience had expected. He not only identified the letters warning James Moreton of the plot to kill him, and giving the Sign of the Thirteen, as those he had written his brother from New Zealand, but also briefly related how he had been kidnapped, tattooed, and sworn to leave New Zealand and to avoid America. He testified

to having received Dr. Carew's letter, urging him to come to New York to take charge of his brother James's affairs, and stated that his planning to do so was what precipitated the attack upon him by members of *Te Toke*. When finally released he dared not, he said, break his oath, until he saw the personal addressed to himself in *The Napier Daily News*. He produced a copy of this, and it was offered in evidence. The personal was surrounded by a heavy border of black, which made it so conspicuous that anyone glancing at the paper could not fail to see it. The witness testified to the tragic death of his father, the awful effect it had produced upon his mother, and the possible prenatal influence it had exerted upon his brother James. When asked if he believed that the lozenge-shaped birthmark upon his brother's left breast,—the mark which Maitland had at first taken for a dagger-wound, on that fateful June 13th,—was caused by the awful shock his mother had received, he replied, without the slightest hesitation: "I have not a doubt of it!" He stated that he had received in all one hundred and six thousand dollars as beneficiary under five insurance policies held by his brother James. He was then asked if his brother had broken either of his arms during his boyhood. He replied in the negative, and then testified that his brother's legs were straight, well-proportioned and of equal length, gratuitously stating that he had been considered the finest example of physical beauty in his gymnasium at Washington. He admitted, with evident shame, that many of James's actions were morally very questionable; told of the unconquerable determination which had given him the soubriquet "Dog"; testified to his physical insensibility to pain, and consequent cruelty; his demoniacal passion for excitement; and his proneness to sharply contrasting moods. When asked

if he and James had been companionable, he replied sadly in the negative, after which he was excused. The defence did not cross-examine.

The remainder of the day was consumed by the State in the examination of witnesses who testified to facts with which the reader already is familiar and which, therefore, need not be repeated here.

. . . . .

That night Maitland called on his friend Willard, with whom he desired to discuss certain points of the Bertram trial.

"Well, Doc, what do you think of it?" was his first question.

"I hardly know, George," Willard replied. "The attitude of the defence is a puzzler to me. They don't seem to care a rap what you introduce, or to what your witnesses testify. Plaisted sits and smiles through it all, and Storrow looks as if he'd sacrifice the whole issue for a nap. They're good attorneys,—at least they are so called,—and what still further flabbergasts me, is that they have the reputation of being fighters from 'way back'! Oh, it's too much for me! I can't make it out."

"But, Doc," laughed his companion, "hasn't it occurred to you that the defence sees, as clearly as the prosecution, that Mr. Charles Bertram is fairly caught, and that their client's best policy will be ultimately to confess? Can you not conceive how, under these circumstances, they might just sit back and watch things drift?"

"Yes," replied the doctor; "and I can also see that they might be intending to admit the facts, and contend that 'Charlie Bert' is morally irresponsible."

"Now, that is precisely what I expect, and I look forward to that confession with a good deal of interest,

for I expect it to enlighten me upon the one detail which as yet I have not mastered; for the rest, I flatter myself I could write his confession for him now to his complete satisfaction,—if he mean to tell the truth."

"And that detail is?"

"You'll know all about it soon, Ned," George replied. "To-morrow I go upon the stand myself, and there'll be 'something doing,' as they say, all the time. You'll witness a somewhat unique and Poo-Bahish entertainment, consisting of the severe and critical examination of your friend George by your friend Maitland,—that's about what it will amount to, for I have coached Barton in regard to what he is to ask me,—so if I get beside myself, you will understand how it happened. I intend to hew to the exact line, but, you know,

"'The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.'"

"—And you may be like the fellow Robert Bridges tells about when he says:

"'He sits in a sea-green grotto with a bucket of lurid paint,
And draws the Thing as it isn't, for the God of things as they ain't.'"

"By the way, George," continued the doctor; "apropos of Adrian Moreton's bereavement, isn't it strange how Calamity seems to adopt some individuals and families for her very own? Here are three deaths in the Moreton household,—father, son and mother, and all of them were the result of others' acts."

"Yes, and the blow is especially hard coming at just this time," his companion replied. "He proposed to Miss Sherwood the day before yesterday and was, of course, rejected. This disappointment, the trial of one of his brother's murderers, and then the news of his

sad bereavement make up a load under which almost any man would stagger."

"Yes, and besides this, the Consolidated Wireless is in a bad way," replied the doctor. "The decrease of capitalisation, being now an accomplished fact, Montrose says, has utterly ruined any market there was for the stock.—Hello! Speak of angels!—Good-evening, Eric. I heard the bell, but I had no idea it was you," and Dr. Willard drew up a chair for his guest.

"We were just speaking of you, Eric," said George. "I understand that the Consolidated is not in what you would exactly call a buoyant condition."

"Buoyant! Ye gods!" exclaimed the young inventor, with manifest disgust, "it's as flat as a doctrinal sermon! Oh! these wonderful financiers have done the trick all right, and you haven't seen their Machiavelian masterpiece either! Their latest move is to charge me with having received the money of the people upon whom they unloaded their stock. I was coolly informed yesterday that a Mrs. Harris had lost thirty thousand dollars through me, and later, the very same day, that a fellow named 'Armstrong' had 'lost all kinds o' money' through my rascality. Now isn't that nice?"

"But didn't you sell these people stock?" the doctor asked.

"*Sell them stock!*" ejaculated Eric. "Why, I wouldn't know either one of them if I met them both in my porridge-dish!—Egad! I don't know now that they are not merely imaginary creatures."

"But why should your financial associates wish to blacken your character after ruining your prospects?" Willard asked in a puzzled tone.

"I will tell you," responded Eric. "Hansel & Son had quite a finger in this pie, and unloaded a good block of stock for cash which they 'needed in their business.'

The people who bought it are now howling that they have been swindled. Well, the Messrs. Hansel are trying to float another enterprise and, of course, the Wireless transaction is thrown in their teeth at every turn. They see no better way to 'save their face' than generously to credit me with all the blame."

"But how dare they do this?" asked the doctor.

"It's a matter of cowardice, not of daring," rejoined the inventor. "Telling the *truth* would be where the courage would come in. The Messrs. Hansel are no fools. They work by innuendo. They 'permit' it to be understood that all the stock was mine, and that I got all the money. They are even kind and truthful enough to create the impression that my invention is worthless, and that I sold them—*sold*, mind you!—a gold-brick. They were, forsooth, grievously disappointed in me and mine; but in the enterprise they are *now* capitalising they have an inventor who is the 'soul of honour,' and an invention destined to revolutionise the entire Solar System, etc., etc., etc.," and young Montrose laughed a hard, bitter laugh.

"It's all pretty low-down trickery, Eric," said George sympathetically, "but never you mind. The devil hasn't yet invented the lie which can stand the test of time, and the truth will some day be known."

"And I make the prophecy now and here," exclaimed Willard earnestly, "that the name of Montrose will live as that of a benefactor of his race when these financial liars and tricksters are but a handful of forgotten dust!"

"And in the meantime?" said Eric solemnly.

"In the meantime?" laughed Maitland. "Why, in the meantime, my Romeo, '—Love can hope where reason would despair.'"

The troubled expression on Eric's face gave place to

a look of sweet contentment, as, seizing Maitland's hand, he exclaimed:

"As a doctor, George, ministering 'to a mind diseas'd,' and plucking 'from the memory a rooted sorrow,' you are certainly a magician!"

"That's so!" laughed Willard; "for in Nature's *materia medica* love is put down as *wizardry*."

CHAPTER IV

But few minds, it has been said, are capable of comprehending the doctrine of chances. In the throwing of a single die there is, of course, one chance in six that the *four*, say, will come uppermost. Suppose now, we throw five times without getting the *four*. What is the ratio of likelihood that the next trial will give it to us?—Can the accumulated experience of a die affect its future? If so, how can we estimate any chance in connection with it? If not so, how can there be any chance in connection with it *to* estimate?—Verily, the calculus of probabilities is but another expression for the algebra of coincidences, and in the presence of what appear to us as irreconcilable axioms, it behooves us to search for a new generalisation.

THE fourth day of the trial of Charles Bertram for the murder of James Eldredge Moreton was entirely consumed in hearing the testimony of George Maitland. It is not often that a counsel in a case is, at the same time, its most important witness; and there was, therefore, a quite unusual flutter of excitement when District Attorney Barton called Maitland to the stand. The questions he asked were those the witness had himself prepared, and were intended to develop a multitude of facts with which the reader already is familiar, as well as many which, thus far, have not been put before him. In view of these circumstances, therefore, it does not seem necessary to quote Maitland's testimony *in extenso*, it being considered quite sufficient to repeat its novel and more essential portions.

The witness told how he had been employed by Mr. James Moreton as a private detective, in the belief that he might be able to shed some light upon certain mysterious threatening letters which were causing the young financier considerable anxiety. Several of these letters were put in evidence, the witness testifying as follows:

Q. Did you notice anything peculiar in regard to these missives?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please state what attracted your attention.

A. I first noticed that they all bore the selfsame hieroglyph to which, at that time, I was unable to attach any meaning. Later, Mr. Moreton showed me a newspaper representation of the weapon which had killed his father some twenty-five years previously. Upon the blade was the same hieroglyph.

Q. What did you infer from this?

A. But two explanations presented themselves to my mind. The mysterious figure, I thought, might be the symbol of some brotherhood or organisation pledged to wreak vengeance, not only upon the elder Moreton, but upon other members of his family as well; or it might have been adopted, in these present instances, by some person or persons who knew nothing whatever of its real significance, and merely made use of it to impress Mr. Moreton with the great gravity of the threats directed against him. When I learned what the assassins of the elder James Moreton had said to his wife at the time of the murder, and considered carefully the singular fact that in no instance did the letters demand money,—or anything else for that matter,—as an alternative to the threatened fate, I was led to consider the former theory as by far the more probable, although, for reasons which seemed to me quite sufficient at the time, I led Mr. Moreton himself to accept the other view of the matter.

Q. What other peculiarities, if any, did you notice?

A. The majority of the letters were typewritten. They were dated at cities separated from each other by very considerable distances, and their enclosing envelopes showed them to have been mailed at these places.

My suspicions were naturally aroused when I discovered that every one of the typewritten letters had been written upon the same machine.

Q. Do you mean the same *make* of machine?

A. I mean the identical instrument. One of two conclusions seemed inevitable. Either the writer of these letters carried a machine with him from city to city, or else he wrote them in one place and dated and mailed them as if written in another. The latter theory impressed me as the more probable.

Q. How were you able to determine that all these letters were printed upon the same machine?

A. By certain typographical peculiarities. There are as many as thirty-five of these, but a few will be sufficient to illustrate what I mean. If you will carefully compare all the letters, you will note that the small "e," the letter which is of most frequent occurrence in our language, exhibits, in every instance, a little open place at its extreme top, caused by a nick in the type which produced it. Furthermore, you will see that it has undergone a leftwardly rotation of several degrees. Now, these two peculiarities alone would be quite sufficient to settle the whole matter; for it would be very unlikely that two machines would have the same letter nicked; still more unlikely that the nicks would be of the same size; increasingly improbable that they would also be upon the same *part* of the same character; and a million times less likely that all these peculiarities would be found upon a type which was in anywise noticeably displaced. What should be said, then, when we find the displacement invariably to be of a rotative character? What when we further ascertain that the rotation is always to the left? And what when it is invariably *the same number of degrees?*

Q. How did you make sure of this last point?

A. I photographed the various letters, and then enlarged them, by lantern projection, to more than a hundred diameters, after which I measured the angular rotative displacement of the vertical axes of the "e's" upon a protractor.

Q. Are there other peculiarities common to all the missives which can readily be pointed out?

A. Yes, sir. The small "m" is rightwardly displaced in every instance, and, being an over-wide letter, the "huddling" effect is very noticeable. Small "a," "c," and "v" all print too high; while "g," "n," "o," "s," and "u" all print too low. Cap. "W" and small "l" are both "off their feet," and print too heavy at their lower edges; while small "h," small "j" and Cap. "R" have just the reverse defect. There are many other purely typographical evidences,—which could only be shown with scientific instruments,—which go to corroborate what the nicked and rotated "e" alone proves beyond a peradventure.

Q. You say you are sure all these printed letters were written upon the one machine. Do you know the name of this machine?

A. Yes, sir. They were all written upon a Remington.

Q. Have you any reason to suspect any particular Remington?

A. Yes, sir; more than that—I know absolutely that they were all printed upon that identical machine there upon the table,—the machine which was brought here from the room occupied by Messrs. Bertram and Gates in Mr. Moreton's suite of offices at 30 Broad Street.

This announcement created a profound sensation among the listeners, who watched the net slowly close about Charles Bertram with that absorbing interest which possesses a hunter as he nears the end of the trail of big game.—Mr. Barton continued:

Q. Have you any suspicions as to who wrote these letters?

A. Yes, sir. I am convinced that I *know* who wrote them.

Q. And that person is?

A. Mr. Charles Bertram!

Again a wave of excitement swept over the room. Even the prisoner gave a slight start at the mention of his name.

Q. Please state upon what you base your conclusion.

A. These threatening letters, including the one sent to *me* but a few hours after Mr. Moreton's murder, were all written upon one machine. While at Mr. Moreton's office the morning after the murder I used the office typewriter to copy a curious cryptogram which I had found by the victim's body. I noticed then that the small "e" was nicked, but did not think anything further of it till months later, when, examining the threatening letters very critically, I observed the same imperfect "e" in every one of them. I at once got the copy of the cryptogram and easily assured myself that it was written upon the identical machine which had printed all of the threatening letters, including my own.

Q. But why should you assert that the prisoner wrote them?

A. In the first place, only he and Mr. Gates had access to the machine, and so one of them must have done it. In the second place, the letters are not in Mr. Gates's typewriting; and, in the third place, they *are* in that of Mr. Bertram. Mr. Gates has testified that he did not learn to use the Caligraph, upon which Mr. Moreton's correspondence was at first printed, but that Mr. Bertram wrote the letters at that time, and became a very proficient operator. He has stated that both he and Mr. Bertram subsequently learned to operate the Rem-

ington, but that Mr. Bertram continued to do most of the work, so that he, Gates, never had enough to do to acquire any considerable degree of dexterity. Bertram, on the contrary, he informs us, could take slow dictation, and frequently did so. He states that Mr. Moreton himself was a rapid operator. It is evident, therefore, that this machine must have been kept in a condition permitting its rapid operation. A typewriter which is suitably adjusted for slow manipulation is not, of necessity, in proper working condition for a rapid operator. Every time a key is released, the carriage moves one space, to make room for the next letter to be printed. If, therefore, the keys be struck in very rapid succession, the carriage must make its step-by-step movements with great rapidity, and this can only be brought about by a very considerable tension of the spring operating it. This tension makes the key-action somewhat harder, but it is simply indispensable to a rapid writer, for without it the carriage would respond so sluggishly that the characters would be superimposed upon one another. Now, Messrs. Bertram and Gates are the only persons who *could* have written those letters, because only they had the opportunity. I believe I can show conclusively that no one of the missives is in the typewriting of Mr. Gates.

Q. Please explain what leads you to this conclusion.

A. If you will examine these letters you will find ample evidence to sustain my contention. Let us, for example, take two of them written several months apart, the one dated Philadelphia, December 20th, and addressed to Mr. Moreton, and the other dated New York, June 13th —the very day of the murder!—and addressed to me. We will consider the former first. The seventh word in the body of this letter is the word "sealed," and I will ask you to note that the "d" partially overlaps the "e"

in the final "ed" of the word. The third word of the next sentence is "of," the "f" of which is in contact with the "o." In the next sentence the fourth from the last word, "and," shows the "n" and the "d" overlapping, and both of them too near the "a." Take, now, the letter which I received by special delivery the morning after the murder. The eighth word, "that," and the "ing" in the twenty-fourth word, exhibit the same "huddling" tendency. The ninth word in the fifth sentence is "progress," in which you will at once observe that the two final "s's" are partially superimposed. Look at the very last sentence. The "ing" in "meddling" and the "an" in "can" are huddled together.

Q. Will you state what bearing this has upon your conclusion?

A. It shows that the machine upon which all these letters were printed,—the machine which was given a carriage-tension sufficient to meet, let us say, the *ordinary* requirements of two such skilled operators as Mr. Moreton and Mr. Bertram,—was yet too sluggish for the man who wrote these letters, when he came to print the familiar, — because oft-recurring, — combinations of characters to which I have invited attention. Now, if you will examine James Moreton's letter-book, you will find in all the letters written by Mr. Bertram between December 20th and June 13th,—the respective dates of the two missives we have just examined,—the same "huddling" tendency exhibited in such familiar combinations as "ed," "an," "ing," etc. As you turn backward from December 20th, you find the tendency less and less marked the more remote the date, until it practically disappears a few weeks from the time we are told the Remington was installed.

Q. How was it when the Caligraph was used?

A. Here is the book containing the Caligraph work just prior to the introduction of the Remington. You will note the same tendency to "bunch" familiar combinations.

Q. You rely wholly, then, upon the statement of Gates that he was not a rapid writer upon either machine to prove that these letters were the work of Mr. Bertram?

A. No, sir. If Mr. Gates had claimed to be a skilled operator, I should not have hesitated to contradict him.

Q. Upon what ground?

A. Please turn again to the letter-books. You note that all the letters written by Bertram are initialled "C. B." under the words "dictated to," while the few that Mr. Gates printed bear the letters "H. G." similarly located. Now, you will look in vain for any "huddling" of characters in letters bearing the initials "H. G.," while you will find abundant evidence of erasures, improperly spaced punctuations, badly aligned capitals,—showing that the shift-key was not properly operated,—and an occasional mixture of upper and lower case, not always completely erased.

In the letters initialled "C. B." you do not find these mistakes, but you do find the "huddling" tendency, and an occasional transposition of characters, as "ain" for "ian"—defects peculiar to rapid writers.

Q. Are there any other observations which have influenced your conclusion?

A. Yes, sir. Mr. Bertram got to be as rapid a Caligraph operator as his employer, though the latter had used that machine several years before Bertram even learned its keyboard. Now, the Caligraph keys have a short dip, and a hard action, requiring, if you please, a sharp, staccato touch for their manipulation. Once acquired, the Caligraph operator never fully forgets this

touch. It is plainly evident in all these threatening letters.

Q. How do you detect it?

A. If you will look along the surface of the back of any of these letters you will readily perceive that the indentation,—the degree of puncture,—is excessive, some of the punctuation marks actually breaking the heavy paper. This is due to striking the keys of the Remington with the staccato blow necessary to operate the Caligraph. There is yet another and more conclusive proof which might easily escape the casual observer. Look once more at the letter of December 20th. In the fourth sentence you find the word "repent," and, upon careful examination, you find that it was at first written "rtpent," after which an "e" was printed over the "t." In the letter sent to me you find the word "murderer," and you observe, as you scrutinise it, that it was at first spelled "murdtrer," and that then an "e" was placed over the "t." There, near the end of the communication, you note the word "necessary." Look at it closely and you will see that it was originally written "nejessary."

Q. And what do these errors lead you to infer?

A. That the writer of these letters was a skilful Caligraph operator. You see, learning a keyboard is like learning piano fingering,—purely a matter of educating the subconsciousness; and there are many very rapid operators who could not tell you whether a certain character were upon the right or left side of their keyboard. They find it automatically, but could not tell its location. Now, it is even harder to *eradicate* a subconscious habit than it is to *form* one, and this is what makes it so difficult to change from one keyboard to another having a different arrangement of characters. I have here diagrams of the keyboards of the Caligraph and of the

Remington. You will note that where the Caligraph arrangement runs "w, t, r, e, y," the Remington order is "w, e, r, t, y." In printing "rtpent" for "repent," the finger of the operator strayed on to the old familiar key which, in the Caligraph, used to produce "e," and got "t" as a result. In the word first written "murdtrer" the "t" is accounted for in the same way. Now, where the Caligraph keyboard runs "a, s, d, f, g, h, c," the Remington order is "a, s, d, f, g, h, j," the "c" of the Caligraph occupying the place of the Remington "j," which accounts for the word "necessary" being misspelled "nejessary." I regard all this as the most conclusive evidence that these letters were written by one in whose subconsciousness still lived the "memory," if you will permit the term, of the Caligraph's key arrangement. We know that this could not be said of Henry Gates, and are accordingly able, it seems to me, to state with the most absolute assurance that every one of those letters was written by Charles Bertram. If, now, you will examine this cryptogram, which I myself found immediately after the murder close by the body of the victim, you will observe that it, too, was written upon the identical machine used in the production of the threatening letters.

Q. Is there anything else in regard to these letters which has influenced you in the conviction you say you have formed?

A. Yes, sir. The date of the earliest of these letters is but a little subsequent to that of the first two false entries in Bertram's books. The first defalcation represents money which Bertram took for a stock "flier," and which doubtless he expected at once to replace. The market declined, and the second false entry indicates funds which went to cover margins. Then came a bear raid, resulting in a panic, which swept Mr. Bertram clean

of everything. He could not hope ever to replace the money he had taken. Then it was that he conceived this masterly crime, and indited the first of these letters. He knew all about Adrian Moreton's warnings to his brother James, and worked the mysterious hieroglyph with rare skill and great effect.

The witness then testified in regard to the robbery which occurred upon the night of the murder. He described the confusion in which he had found the office the next morning, and related, in part, the nature of the inquiries made by the officers and himself. He explained the condition in which he had found the safe, and produced a few grains of greyish-black powder which, he informed the Court, he had at that time swept up from the floor. The prosecution offered this powder in evidence and the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Did you show this powder to anyone at the time you gathered it up?

A. Yes, sir. Officers Sheehan and Burke and Mr. Bertram saw it, and we all discussed it more or less.

Q. Did the officers regard it as of any importance?

A. I do not think so. They said they already knew just how the hole was melted in the safe. They were sure the robbers had tapped the electric wires just outside the building and produced an arc in which the steel was melted. They were so sure of this that I could not even induce them to examine the mains to see where the leads had been taken off.

Q. Did you ascertain the nature of the substance which you scraped from the floor?

A. When I returned to my laboratory,—yes, sir. It was a mixture of oxide of iron and aluminum. It convinced me at once that we had to deal with at least one criminal who was thoroughly up in the very latest scientific research. I promptly catalogued the moving spirit

of this robbery among criminals of the very highest grade of intelligence.

Q. Do you know how this powder came to be upon the floor?

A. It was used in the robbery, and a little of it was accidentally spilled.

Q. Please explain how it was used.

A. The mixture is one of several substances belonging to the recently discovered science known as "alumino-thermics," and is called "thermit." When a pound, say, of this "thermit" is ignited by applying a storm-match to a small pinch of ignition-powder placed in the middle of its surface, a reaction is at once started. This extends quickly and steadily from the point of ignition, and,—no matter what the quantity used,—involves the whole mass in less than a minute. This reaction develops a heat estimated at fifty-four hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Now, several pounds of this "thermit" were placed by the robbers in a large crucible and ignited. When the reaction had taken place the crucible was tapped at the bottom and its contents poured upon the safe, through which it promptly melted a hole. The clay dam which had served to retain the molten contents of the crucible in contact with the portion of the safe to be melted had left such unmistakable evidences of its use that I could not but marvel that my official friends were so readily led astray.

Q. Do I understand that you feel assured that electricity played no part in melting the hole in the safe?

A. It could not possibly have done so. I examined the insulation upon the outside mains. It had not been tampered with.

Q. But might not the current which lighted the office have been employed?

A. No, sir. All that current comes through a metre

located in another part of the building, to which the cracksmen did not have access. This metre carried a twenty-ampere fuse which was not blown. Such an amount of current could never have produced such results.

Q. Was there anything in connection with this robbery which led you to suspect any one person as being implicated therein?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please explain what gave rise to these suspicions.

A. Before we left 30 Broad Street the day after the robbery I asked Mr. Bertram if he had the key to the little wall-safe or closet. He replied that he had not. I asked him if he would lend me his key-ring, so that I might see if any of his keys would, perchance, fit the lock. He reluctantly complied with my request, and the very first key I tried opened the closet with perfect ease. In it I found a number of articles which have since proved of rare evidential value. I did not have time then,—owing to the fact that the officers were waiting to seal the room,—to make even a cursory examination of the contents of this closet, and so I remained entirely ignorant of their great evidential value till after my return from New Zealand. Had I made a careful examination when I first opened the closet I could scarcely have failed to appreciate the great significance of almost the first thing which would have come to my notice.

Q. What was that?

A. A copy of *The Journal of the Franklin Institute*. It was No. 4 of Vol. CLVII. The very first article was entitled "Alumino-Thermics, or the Production of High Temperatures by Burning Aluminum," by E. Stütz. It would have been plainly evident to anyone that this article had been most carefully examined by

someone, for the pages upon which it was printed were the only ones in the magazine which had been carefully pressed open, and the second page of the article—which is numbered "242" in the publication—bore a minute blot of carmine ink, such as bookkeepers use for rulings. I am confident, of course, that this very article, which describes the exact method of melting a hole through a heavy plate of wrought iron, furnished the information for this very clever exhibition of the cracksman's craft.

The witness then described some of his discoveries at 163 Lombrose Street. He explained how the pistol had been fired by someone standing at, or near, the place where he remembered Charles Bertram stood when the lights went out. He illustrated, with great care, the clever way in which the current had been short-circuited so as to blow the metre-fuse and plunge the room in darkness.

He dwelt at length upon the fact that there were no windows whatever in the room, and no possible means of egress or ingress save the one door. He impressed upon the Court, by repeated statement, the fact that this door was locked, and that he himself and many others stood just outside it in the hall until the arrival of the medical examiner and the officers. He then told how he and Dr. Carew returned to the room with the examiner and the officers, and of the terrible shock which there awaited them. When he testified with painstaking detail to this miraculous disappearance of the corpse, notwithstanding the fact that the District Attorney had already alluded to it, in a general way, the jury, no less than the spectators, fairly gasped in open-mouthed amazement. It was quite another thing to have every particular so graphically put before them. Some were even loth to believe their ears, and a buzz of

excitement followed the sensational bit of testimony. When quiet was restored the witness described how, immediately upon the departure of the medical examiner, the door had, at Dr. Carew's suggestion, not only been locked, but repeatedly sealed with the utmost care.

District Attorney Barton then reverted to the work which had been done upon the flooring at 163 Lombrose Street, and the witness testified that he had examined it most thoroughly, and found that a jack-knife having three nicks in its blade had been used to cut away the tongues from a short section of two of the floor-boards. These sections, the witness said, he had carefully removed from the floor, and they were offered in evidence.

The subsequent testimony in regard to this was as follows:

Q. You have spoken of a knife having three nicks in its blade. Have you been able to find any knife with these peculiarities which you think might have been the one used?

A. I have here in my hand a knife which I know, beyond the possibility of a doubt, was the identical one employed.

This statement, made with such absolute assurance, gave rise to much whispered comment.

Q. There are perhaps at this moment a million jack-knives within a radius of five miles from this court room, any one of which could be used to remove the tongue from a floor-board. In view of this fact how can you be so sure you have secured the *particular instrument* with which the whittling was actually done?

A. I will explain. Let us assume that there are, in the United States, twenty-five million males old enough to carry jack-knives, and who are provided therewith; and let us assume that every one of those twenty-five

million knives was available in this particular instance. Now, how shall we find whether or not this identical one of the twenty-five million knives actually did the whittling in question?

Q. That is precisely what we want to know.

A. Upon examination we find that this knife has several peculiarities which we will separately consider. First: there is a nick somewhere about half an inch from the lower end of the blade. Now, in twenty-five million knives how many would be likely to have nicked blades? Only those which had been improperly used. Let us, however, place the estimate very high,—say, two out of every five,—or, in round numbers, ten million. Now, I have been able, by lantern projection, to determine with absolute certainty the precise location of this nick to within a thousandth part of the length of the blade.

Q. Just what do you mean by its location?

A. The exact distance of the nick from the declivitous shoulder near the handle, where the cutting edge suddenly ceases. This shoulder registered itself upon the board at the same time that the nearest nick did, thus enabling me to determine, to within a thousandth part of the length of the blade, just the distance between this nearest nick and the aforementioned shoulder.

Q. I think that is clear.

A. If so, it will be seen that this nick might have occupied any one of nine hundred and ninety-nine other readily distinguishable locations along the blade. This far more than justifies us in dividing our ten million by one thousand, which gives us a quotient of ten thousand. Now, all this is thus far computed upon a basis manifestly too liberal to the other side; for we have simply *added* improbabilities where we would have been justified in *multiplying* them, since, if the chance of a

knife-blade being nicked at *all* be represented by "a," and the chance of the nick of a nicked blade being in this one specific location be represented by "b," then the unlikelihood of there being a second knife with an indistinguishable blade, not only nicked, but nicked *in just the same location*, would be represented by "ab" rather than "a" plus "b."

Q. Can you make that a little clearer?

A. I will try. Suppose I have two dice and an ordinary dice-box. If I place one of the little cubes in the box and then shake it, it is as likely to land on one side as another, which is to say that there is one chance in six that the six will be uppermost. If I shake the other die by itself, the same is, of course, equally true of that. Suppose, now, I shake both dice together. What will be the likelihood of my getting double sixes, or, for that matter, any other predetermined combination? If we were to add the one chance in six of each die, we should answer, "one chance in twelve"; but this is clearly not the case, since it can readily be seen that to each number thrown by one die, the other die may match any one of *its* six sides, so that we shall be much nearer the fact if we say that the chance of throwing double sixes is one in six *times* six, rather than one in six *plus* six.

Q. I think that is clear.

A. Now, retaining the number ten thousand, despite the fact that it is much too large, let us proceed. We find as we look at the knife again that there is a second nick about three-eighths of an inch from the first. Now, if we were considering the nick by itself, we might treat it as we did the first one, arriving at the conclusion that where there are ten thousand knives with a certain definite peculiarity forming a part of a collection of twenty-five million such tools, the chances of two of those

peculiar knives becoming accidentally associated are as one to twenty-five hundred. We have seen, however, that in the case of these two nicks we must multiply rather than add, so that we may, I think, conservatively say that in this case, the chances are certainly less than one in six and one-quarter millions. Observe now a third nick nearer the point of the blade. If we proceed as before, we make the ratio that of one to nearly seventeen billions. Now, if you will realise for a moment that all this is based upon the distance of each nick from a given part of the blade, and that we have still to consider the relation of the nicks to each other, and the further fact that the first nick has four, the second three, and the third five distinct serrations, every one of which registered itself upon the wood,—our ratio of probability of error in assuming that we have the actual knife becomes so like unto *one* divided by *infinity* that figures utterly fail to hint at it; and even *then* we have hardly touched upon the possible permutations of which these factors are capable.

Q. How were you able to determine the exact coincidence between the notches in this knife-blade and the ridges left upon these pieces of board which you have testified to cutting from the floor of the room in which James Eldredge Moreton was murdered?

A. I used several methods, but one will be sufficient to illustrate the principle. I sawed off a short piece of one of the boards having the ridges clearly defined. Then I treated the surface I wished to copy with fine plumbago, upon which I electro-plated a substantial film of copper. This I reinforced with type-metal. Next, I dissolved the wood away with an acid which would not attack the copper, in order that I might run no risk of destroying any delicate undercut which my work might possess. The result was perfect. With the utmost care

I cut away a thin, transverse section of this electrotype, and carefully mounted it upon a slip of glass. The rest was a mere matter of lantern projection. I placed the knife-blade itself in one lantern and my prepared section in another, and brought the one image down upon the other. They were so exactly alike that I could bring the enlarged images within a hundredth of an inch of each other without perceiving the slightest deviation from *absolute parallelism*. Their superimposition was perfect!

Q. Where did you procure this knife?

A. I borrowed it of Mr. Charles Bertram.

This announcement created a profound sensation. All eyes were turned toward the prisoner, who shifted his position uneasily and seemed, on the whole, noticeably nervous.

Q. You have testified to the disappearance of the murdered man's body immediately after the crime was committed, and while you and many others were standing in the hallway just outside of the only door leading from the room in which you had left the corpse. Can you tell us how, without detection, the assassin, alone or assisted, removed his victim's body from the room in which he killed him?

A. Yes, sir. I believe I can.

As the witness made this reply the court room assumed a grave-like stillness. So intense was the interest that the spectators seemed to hold their breath as with one accord. At last they were to know how the impossible,—for so they regarded it,—had been achieved! The District Attorney continued.

Q. Please state to what you owe this belief.

Everyone leaned forward in order that no word of the witness's reply might be lost. Expectation was keyed to its utmost limit. As Maitland was about to answer

the District Attorney's question, Judge Clapp interrupted him, saying:

"The Court will now adjourn until ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

A chorus of exhalations, which sounded like a great sigh of disappointment, greeted this announcement.

CHAPTER V

The difference between curiosity and interest is the difference between skin and bone,—between the epiphyte and the tap-root. We are *curious* about detached experiences, but only those things *interest* us which fit into the cosmic mosaic adorning the deep and dimly lighted penetralia of our subconsciousness.

THE fifth day of the trial opened with George Maitland still on the stand. District Attorney Barton continued his examination from the point where it had been interrupted by the previous day's adjournment. The District Attorney's last question, "Please state to what you owe this belief," was read, and the witness answered as follows:

A. When I had discovered how the lights were turned off, and the manner in which the pistol had been fired, I at once became impressed with the idea that everything had been worked from within the room. The somewhat elaborate devices for deception which I had already discovered were clearly arranged by someone who repeatedly had access to the room. Then I remembered where Mr. Bertram had stood when the lights were extinguished, and my suspicions immediately assumed a definite trend. Suddenly I recollected seeing at least two books upon magic in the little wall-closet at 30 Broad Street, and with this recollection came the thought that these works might very possibly throw some light upon the mysteries still unsolved. I immediately locked and sealed the room and left the building. In less than an hour I was examining the contents of the fireproof closet in the Johnston Build-

ing. It contained the following articles, piled in a single pile in the order named, beginning at the top:

1. No. 4 of Vol. CLVII of *The Journal of The Franklin Institute.*

2. "Letters on Natural Magic," by Sir David Brewster; London, 1868.

3. Vol. VIII of "The Richmond Edition of The Works of Edgar Allan Poe."

4. A slip of paper on which was typewritten, "Autom. Brit."

5. "Magic; Stage Illusions and Scientific Diversions," by Albert A. Hopkins.

6. "Modern Magic," by Professor Hoffmann.

7. A slip of paper on which was typewritten "Magic; Brit. 210."

8. "Cyclopædic Science Simplified," by J. H. Pepper.

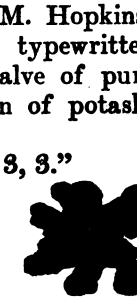
9. "Twentieth Century Magic," by N. M. Hopkins.

10. A slip of paper upon which was typewritten "et&yi)iy)qe% First rub well with a salve of pure acetic acid and lard, then with a solution of potash, and finally with hydrochloric acid."

11. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol, by C. 3, 3."

12. "Responsibility in Mental Disease," by Henry Maudsley, M. D.

13. A slip of paper bearing this character:



14. "Anthropology," by Edward B. Tylor, D. C. L., F. R. S.

15. "Criminal Sociology," by Enrico Ferri.

16. "The Female Offender," by Professor Cæsar Lombroso and William Ferrero.

17. "The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic," by Robert Houdin.

18. "Science and Crime," by Andrew Wilson, F. R. S. E.

Q. Did these articles teach you anything pertinent to this case?

A. Yes, sir. Glance a moment at the list. No. 1 explains the use of "thermit" in the robbery. Nos. 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 17 are at once seen to pertain to magic, and we shall see later that to these may also be added Nos. 3, 4, and 8, making nine out of the seventeen which are connected, in one way or another, with magical deceptions,—a proportion of more than fifty per cent. Nos. 1, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 18 all have some bearing upon crime, and Nos. 1 and 13 upon this crime in particular. This accounts for all but 10 and 14, which we need not consider at present. We find, therefore, nine pertaining to magic, and seven to crime; and we are engaged in the solution of a crime which itself seems magical! I can hardly see how any list could be more suggestive.

Q. Did you examine any of these items closely?

A. Yes, sir; I examined them all to the best of my ability, though not so carefully at that time as later, for as soon as I had discovered what seemed to me a most promising clue I was all impatience to get back to 163 Lombrose Street to test it.

Q. Please tell us how you discovered this clue.

A. My first task was to ascertain, if possible, in what portions of the books Mr. Bertram had been interested. I felt reasonably sure I could discover this by ascertaining and classifying the contents of each book, and then comparing my tables to see what subjects were common to several or all of them. This, however, would take a long time, and I determined to try another plan first. I took up No. 2 and held it between the palms of my hands, with its back resting upon the desk. Then

I suddenly removed my hands and let the book fall open at random. It opened at page 321. I repeated the experiment five times, with the result that I got page 321 four times and page 325 once, making a total of 321 five out of six times. This I considered as very good evidence that the volume had been opened at page 321 sufficiently often, or held open sufficiently long, to render that particular portion of the volume less resistant to flexure than any other. I then read pages 321 and 325 and found that both of them treated of Baron Kempelen's automaton chess-player. I recorded my results, and performed the same experiment six times upon No. 3. This was a little flat-backed volume, and the covers would not of themselves fall clear back upon the desk. I had, therefore, to note the place where the volume gaped open the widest. The results were as follows: pages 97, 102, 97, 111, 97, 102. Upon examination I found that "Mælzel's Chess-Player" occupied pages 90 to 128 inclusive, page 97 containing an illustrative diagram. The very first page of this article contains a reference to the identical book we have catalogued as No. 2, while a perusal of No. 2 shows Baron Kempelen to have been the inventor of the automaton exhibited in Great Britain by M. Mælzel in 1819-20. Let us now look at No. 4. What is meant by "Autom. Brit."? Of course, "Automaton" at once suggests itself to us as the full outline of the first abbreviation, and, a moment later, "Britannica" as that of the second. This I assumed to be a reference to the article "Automaton" in the Encyclopædia Britannica. This, of course, I could not at once verify.

Q. Did you subsequently read that article?

A. Yes, sir; and found it dealt with Kempelen's Automaton. I proceeded in the same manner with No. 5, and got 370, 46, 370, 373, 46, 370. Upon exami-

nation I found that 370 and 373 explained Baron Kempelen's chess-player, while 46 describes the Indian-basket trick. No. 6 gave me 392, 271, 479, 271, 392, 271. Page 392 describes the "Inexhaustible Box," page 479, the Indian-basket trick, and 271 was where the volume was broken in the binding, so I counted that number out. I went through the entire list of books in this way. No. 17, although evidently in line with the other works upon magic, exhibited no tendency to open in any particular place. No. 11 was too thin and light a volume to lend itself to the experiment. 12, 16, and 18 seemed to have been thoroughly read and would open nearly as easily in one place as another, though No. 12 gave me page 176 twice out of the six trials. I found that 176 dealt with that form of mental disorder known as "*Folie circulaire.*" No. 7, which I afterward found was the article "Magic" at page 210 of Vol. XV of the Encyclopædia Britannica, gave me Kempelen's automaton again. No. 8 gave me page 48 once, which refers to a trick-cabinet, while No. 9 gave me 49 and 51 each once, both of these pages treating of a smaller trick-cabinet based upon the same principle. No. 10 is a recipe and No. 13 the sign with which we have become so familiar. Nos. 14 and 15 gave me nothing definite.

Q. And what did you conclude from all this?

A. First, that my suspicions of Charles Bertram were well founded; second, that the contents of this closet were of the utmost importance; third, that the order of arrangement of most of its contents was such as clearly to prove just what portions of each book were of interest to Mr. Bertram. Such a classification would not happen, as a *mere coincidence, once in a million years!* Fourth, that Baron Kempelen's wonderful automaton, together with trick-cabinets and apparatus

for magical disappearance, was a source of great interest to Mr. Bertram; and fifth, that I had better get right back to 163 Lombrose Street and overhaul the wardrobe with a care never before bestowed upon it.

Q. And did you do so?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What did you ascertain?

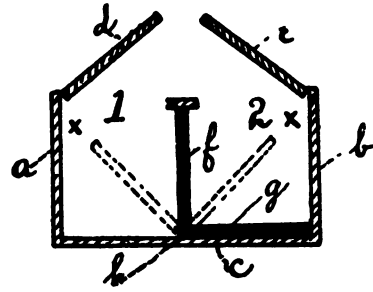
A. The wardrobe was unlocked. I opened both its doors and moved it away from the wall as far as the railing would permit. I had entertained some suspicions as to its back, but examination showed these to be groundless. It was glued solidly in place. I examined the central partition separating the two compartments. I found it held firmly in place by screws entering it from both the front and the back of the wardrobe. In short, examine the thing as I might, it seemed as innocent of deception as a babe. I had just decided to give it up in despair, when it suddenly occurred to me that I had not noticed any glue upon the middle partition. It was apparently held in place solely by screws. I thought of the "Indian-basket trick," the "inexhaustible box," and some of the other things with which I had become familiar in my examination of the little wall-closet, and a light seemed to dawn upon my darkness. I removed all the screws which held the central partition, and the mysterious wardrobe gave up its secret!

An almost painful suspense reigned throughout the courtroom as District Attorney Barton asked:

Q. What did you find?

A. I found the wardrobe to be a sort of double Indian-basket apparatus stood upon its end. If you will look at this rough plan which I have drawn, you will see the principle of the thing far better than I can describe it.

(The witness passed a slip of paper to the District Attorney upon which was this figure, and continued.)



The external walls of the wardrobe are indicated by "a," "b," "c," the last letter representing the back. "d" and "e" are the two doors which I have shown as open. "f" is the central partition, which is rigidly secured to "g," forming therewith an angle of ninety degrees, the two pivoting at "h." The dotted lines show "f" "g" during its pivotal movement. I have numbered the two compartments "1" and "2" for convenience in referring to them.

(The jury studied this diagram at some length, after which District Attorney Barton continued:)

Q. Can you tell us what use was made of this wardrobe?

A. Yes, sir. It was this that enabled the assassin to secrete the corpse of his victim!

The spectators looked at each other in astonishment, and not a few showed their incredulity by "knowing" smiles. At last Maitland had overreached himself. Even the jury were rapidly losing confidence in him.

Q. Have not you and others testified that each of the

compartments of this wardrobe was thoroughly examined at the time we are considering?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How, then, did this wardrobe enable the assassin to secrete his victim's body if the corpse was not in it at the time of its examination?

A. The corpse *was* in it at the time of its examination, and the murderer also.

This announcement utterly staggered both jury and spectators.

Q. How could the corpse of a child,—to say nothing of that of so large a man as James Eldredge Moreton,—be concealed in the wardrobe during the actual time when five men were examining both its compartments by the light of a large kerosene lamp?

This was precisely what the spectators and the jury wished to know.

A. If you will examine No. 2 or No. 5 upon my catalogue of the contents of the little fireproof closet at 30 Broad Street, you will discover that the basic principle of Baron Kempelen's automaton chess-player has only to be applied to our wardrobe to make everything perfectly plain. With this wardrobe, as with the Baron's automaton, no space large enough to secrete the smallest human being was left unexamined, but,—and here is the secret of the whole deception,—we did not examine both compartments *at one and the same time.*

Q. Will you explain this more specifically?

A. Yes, sir. The assassin seized the corpse by its waist, and, holding it in an upright position in front of him, entered the compartment marked "1" on my diagram, and closed its door behind him, the spring lock holding it fast. Then, pressing against the movable partition, he passed with the corpse into compartment "2," when the position of the rectangular, hinged

partition was as shown by the dark lines in the sketch. It will be remembered that the letterpress stand was in front of this half of the wardrobe, and that the other side was naturally examined first. The door to compartment "1" was then closed, in order that the copying outfit which blocked compartment "2" might be moved in front of it, thus permitting the door of the second compartment to be opened. While this was being done the assassin pressed against the central partition and passed with the corpse into compartment "1," this partition then becoming,—considered in connection with the Indian-basket trick,—the false bottom, or false rear wall of "1," while the false bottom of "2" became in turn the central partition.

Q. Why would not a mere swinging flap have been much simpler, as a central partition, and equally effective?

A. The dimensions of sections "1" and "2" are such as just neatly to accommmodate two men standing close together one in front of the other. If you will glance for a moment at the dotted lines of the diagram, you will see that, had a mere swinging flap been used, it would have been impossible for the occupants of the sections to have gotten around it so as to permit it to swing back; for the spaces marked "xx" in the diagram are far too small to permit the passage of a man.

Q. But would not such handling of the body of so large a man as James Moreton have been quite beyond the strength of any one man?

A. Certainly not beyond that of Mr. Charles Bertram, who is known, on several occasions, to have similarly handled living men at least twenty pounds heavier than the corpse in question.

Q. (By a juror). Does it not impress you as a little singular that a man who was clever enough to plan such

a crime should not have considered the possibility of these wardrobe doors being opened in an order different from that which actually obtained?

A. It certainly did at first, and I even went further, and asked myself what assurance the assassin had that both doors would not be opened at once. As I studied the matter more thoroughly, however, and examined more closely into the intricacies of the wardrobe, I found that the assassin had provided against both of these points with an ingenuity which amazed me. The means employed for this purpose have impressed me as some of the strongest evidential circumstances making toward the prisoner's guilt.

Q. Please explain yourself more fully.

A. Mr. Bertram had much to do with the appointments at 163 Lombrose Street. To my mind this is a most significant fact. The railing about the door enclosed this wardrobe and the letterpress stand, and ended a few inches beyond the northern end of the wardrobe. The space enclosed by this railing was not wide enough to permit the copying outfit to be moved away from the front of the wardrobe a sufficient distance to permit its doors to swing, while the desk at which Mr. Bertram sat, when he examined the qualifications of the stockholders and proxies, prevented anyone from moving the letterpress stand near enough to the hall door to permit the opening of compartment No. 1. The northerly angle of the railing rendered it similarly impracticable to move the copying cabinet far enough in that direction to enable one to open compartment No. 2 of my diagram. Thus it will be seen that it was absolutely impossible to open both doors at once without either bodily lifting the copying cabinet over the railing or moving Mr. Bertram's desk, neither of which acts would have been at all natural under the circumstances.

Q. But suppose the wrong door had been opened first?

A. That was next to impossible. In the first place, it would indeed have been singular had anyone insisted upon passing a door which was free to swing as soon as unlocked, and then moving in front of it a piece of furniture which would effectively block it, for the mere sake of opening the farther door first. Suppose, however, someone had attempted this? The assassin would have heard the movement of the heavy copying cabinet and would promptly have betaken himself and his burden to the other compartment. Both doors are provided with snap-locks and are self-closing, so that had there been ample room to open both at once, such an act would have been most unnatural, since it would have necessitated that the first one be held open while the second one was unlocked. Nor did the painstaking ingenuity of the master-mind which planned this affair end here. By examining the snap-locks themselves, I found each one provided with a concealed pin, or detent, which could be forced into its bolt in a way to prevent it being withdrawn. Thus the murderer, when in either compartment, had but to press the pin into the lock of that door which would expose him if opened, in order to make sure that it would remain closed.

Q. Then both the murdered man's body and the murderer remained in the wardrobe throughout your examination?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did I not understand that the room was sealed when you left it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could these seals have been removed, broken, replaced, or in any way tampered with without your knowledge?

A. No, sir; I do not think so.

Q. In what condition did you find them upon your next visit?

A. Absolutely intact.

Q. Was the murderer there with the body of his victim at that time?

A. No, sir.

Q. But if there are no windows or other means of egress, save the door, and you securely locked and sealed that while the assassin was within, are you going to ask us to believe he got himself and the body of his victim out of the room without disturbing the seals?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. *What! Through what opening, pray?*

A. Through the doorway.

Q. Without breaking the seals?

A. Without breaking the seals. When we left the room we sealed the door in eight places. In four cases we used strings, and in four slips of paper. Half of the seals were impressed with Officer Sheehan's cameo, and upon the other half I used my own seal ring. The strips of paper and the string were sealed, one end to the door and the other end to the casing. The door was locked. Seemingly it would be impossible for anyone to enter or leave this room without our knowing it, yet, as a matter of fact, our elaborate precautions imposed no bar whatsoever to the assassin's secret egress. We might as well have left the door wide open.

This statement caused a profound sensation in the court room.

Q. Please explain that.

A. I can do so in a word. The casing to which we so carefully sealed the door was not a *fixed* casing, but was merely a hinged frame, in which the door swung. By pressing a secret spring this frame,—carrying with it the door, as if it were the canvas of a picture,—could be

pushed open without in the least disturbing any of our seals. It could be operated either from the inside or the outside. Thus did the murderer remove his victim's body from the scene of the awful crime in a way that added wonderment to horror.

A low murmur traversed the room, accompanied by something which sounded very like a sigh of relief, as the tensely keyed excitement of the audience let itself down a good octave at this final solution of one of the great mysteries which had so long overtaxed both their reason and their credulity. Mr. Barton studied for a moment some slips of paper upon the table before him, and then resumed the examination.

Q. Did you notice whether or not Mr. Moreton wore a watch at the stockholders' meeting?

A. Yes, sir. He had an open-faced silver time-piece, which he laid upon his desk. I saw it very distinctly, because I went up to it to compare my time with his.

Q. Was this the watch he usually wore?

A. No, sir. He generally carried a superb, fully-jewelled gold time-piece inscribed with his monogram.

Q. Was this gold watch the one you found in the grave in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. When you discovered that this grave contained an article not in Mr. Moreton's possession at the time of his murder, what did you think?

A. I did a deal too little thinking. The missing head, and other suspicious circumstances, caused me to sacrifice everything else to what appeared to me as the imperative necessity for securing John White before he should have time to dispose of the victim's head, which I felt all but certain he had in his possession. This error, though a most natural one, was none the less inexcusable. Of course, I could not but notice the singular fact that

the victim had been buried with a watch not in his possession at the time of his murder, and without the one he was known to possess; and several reasons why this might have been done formulated themselves in my mind, only to find that they could make no headway against the conviction that one John White was hurrying away from New York with James Moreton's head in his trunk.

The witness then related the details of the gruesome disinterment in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street, and again adverted to the threatening letter he had received by special delivery the morning after the murder. He said this letter left no doubt that his search with the hound upon the night of the murder had been observed either by the assassin or an accomplice.

He told how he had found the mysterious cryptogram by the murdered man's body, and the document was placed in evidence. He then adverted to the letter he had received from Madame Duval, and told how he and Dr. Willard had learned through her the whereabouts of the buried body. Explaining, then, the system of the cryptogram, and submitting a translation of the same, he called attention to the fact that the information derived from Madame Duval was precisely that contained in the cipher.

At this juncture District Attorney Barton said:

"The ramifications of this case are quite extraordinary, and, if followed to the uttermost, would show a record of crime not only on the part of the prisoner, but upon that of several others as well. The prosecution is prepared, if necessary, to follow every evidential thread to its remote end, but it has no desire, at this juncture, if it can be avoided, to examine into matters which will inflict injury in somewhat remote quarters. We cannot but feel, in view of the overwhelming evidence against the accused, that he may desire, before this trial is

finished, to avail himself of his privilege to withdraw, with the consent of the Court, his former plea and plead guilty. Such a course would save certain of his friends a deal of very painful notoriety. In view of these considerations, if it please the Court, the prosecution will not at present examine the witness upon all collateral lines of evidence, though it may be necessary to do so a little later.

The witness then testified to many things with which the reader is already familiar, going into Madame Duval's planchette-communication with great thoroughness.

District Attorney Barton then returned to the subject of the disposal of James Moreton's body, and the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Do you believe the same man who killed Mr. Moreton also made away with his body?

A. I do, most assuredly.

Q. Do you believe the accused performed both of these acts?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Can you inform us just when and how the body was disposed of?

A. I did not see the act performed, and can, therefore, offer no direct proof. My own convictions are the result of circumstantial evidence which impresses me as of a very high order of probability.

Q. Is it your belief that the accused buried his victim early upon the night of the murder?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you think he buried him before the commission of the robbery?

A. No, sir.

Q. Between that time and daylight?

A. No, sir.

Q. When, then, in your opinion, did he dispose of his victim's body?

A. Between ten and eleven o'clock upon the night of the murder, I should think.

This reply created utter consternation. Officer Burke winked ponderously at Sheehan with his strabismic eye as he whispered:

"I say, ol' man! the sleuth from Boston has water—bean-water—on the brain!"

Q. (By a juror). Did I not understand you to say that you did not think the accused buried the murdered man's body before the robbery?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. (By the juror). And did you not also say that you did not think he buried him between the robbery and daylight?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. (By the juror). And did you not then say that, in your opinion, the body was disposed of between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of the murder?

A. Yes, sir.

A plainly audible laugh greeted this reply. The spectators thought it rare sport to see a juror trip so self-centered a witness.

Q. (By the Court). You do not appear to appreciate the inconsistency of your testimony.

A. I must confess, Your Honour, that I do not.

Q. (By the Court). Do you not see that if the robbery occurred upon the night of June 13th and the burial neither preceeded it nor was consummated at any subsequent time prior to daylight the next morning, it is hardly possible to conceive that the interment took place between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of said June 13th?

A. Yes, Your Honour; that is all perfectly clear to me.

Q. (By the Court). Why, then, did you assert it as your belief that James Moreton's corpse was buried between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of June 13th?

A. I am not aware, Your Honour, that I made any such statement.

Q. (By the Court). You certainly did.

A. You mistake, Your Honour; I am positive I did not.

Again the laugh went round.

The Court. The stenographer will please read the question to which the witness replied by naming a time between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of the murder.

The Stenographer (reading). "When, in your opinion, did he dispose of his victim's body?"

The Court (to witness). Now, sir; what reply did you make to that?

A. I replied: "Between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of the murder, I should think."

The spectators began to wonder if the witness were losing his senses, while the jury looked as if it had just answered that question in the affirmative.

Q. (By the Court). And what, pray, did you understand me to ask?

A. I think your exact words were: "Why, then, did you assert it as your belief that James Moreton's corpse was buried between ten and eleven o'clock on the night of June 13th?"

Q. (By the Court). Well, sir?

A. Your difficulty, Your Honour, arises from your assumption that *disposed of* and *buried* are synonymous in this case.—I believe James Moreton's corpse was *disposed of* by sinking it in the Hudson between the hours I have mentioned. I do not believe it was *ever buried* by the assassin.

The spectators looked helplessly at each other. The

laugh was on the wrong side! In spite of their certainty that he had at last been "caught napping," the witness was still master of the situation. Officer Burke expressed the prevailing sentiment when he whispered into the fuzzy ear of his fellow-officer:

"He's a cat—a tom-cat, begorra!—is the bean-eater! He allus lands 'roight soide up with care,' loike that case o' gin ye got marked 'catchup'!"

"We will stop here for the day," said the Court.

CHAPTER VI

The fire-engine has the right of way before all other traffic; and there are times, in the lives of all of us, when it seems as if the horrent hosts of Calamity were a sort of infernal fire department, taking precedence over all the normal activities of our hopes.

"SEE here, Mr. Detective," said Dr. Willard to George Maitland about three hours after the occurrence of the events last narrated, "what makes you think 'Charlie Bert' threw the body into the river?"

"Because I learned, after my return from New Zealand," answered Maitland, "that a man's body, loaded down with stones, had been brought up by a dredger a few weeks after the murder. The corpse, of course, was in an unrecognisable condition. It remained at the morgue unclaimed, and was finally buried. As nearly as can be estimated from its recorded condition when found, it must have been thrown into the water somewhere about June 13th. Of course I have something more accurate than the condition of the corpse to go by; for instance: The body was thrown into the river nearly three hundred feet from shore. The boat used was hired of one Michael Riley, who was able to fix the hour from the fact that his suspicions were excited by the strange behaviour of the two young men. He had seen them row out from shore, go up the river a short distance, then row in shore and take some sort of large bundle aboard. The moon was bright, but his eyes were too old to enable him to tell much about this bundle, except that it had seemed heavy enough to require both men to lift it. Then the boat had been

taken out into the stream, and he had heard a splash, as if some heavy object had been dropped over its side, though he had not actually seen anything consigned to the waters. The boat was at once returned to him, and it contained no bundle. He gave me a far better description of Bertram and Gates than I could reasonably expect so long after the occurrence. I had the body which the dredger brought up disinterred for examination. Its measurements and the colour of the hair were right for Moreton's body. The teeth were almost perfect, only one of them,—the left lower wisdom tooth,—having been filled. I visited Moreton's dentist and learned from his books that he had filled James Eldredge's third lower left molar just prior to the Christmas before his death. It was the only time Moreton had ever been to him, and he did not think he had ever had any other New York dentist. He did not remember noticing any other fillings."

"But I can't understand, George," interrupted Willard, "what part the body we unearthed played in this affair, and why the watch and that expensive jewelry should have been buried."

"Why, simply to make us believe the body was that of James Moreton, and that the crime was one of vengeance,—or, what amounts to the same thing, that robbery was *not* its purpose. If Henry Gates had remained faithful to his principal we should have a very much harder nut to crack. Bertram, of course, relied upon Gates keeping his mouth shut, instead of which he has been frightened into telling how Moreton was robbed of his watch, jewels, etc., the day before the murder. Bertram took these valuables then because he wanted to fix up that quicklime-grave the night before the murder. 163 Lombrose Street was then an innocent locality, whereas he knew that, twenty-four hours later, it would

be an object of the gravest suspicion and of the most troublesome curiosity."

"But what was the necessity for burying the substitute body at all?" asked Willard.

"Doc," replied the other, "the whole thing has the diabolical ingenuity of a crazy chess-master. This fact alone points so directly to our friend Bertram that it is too significant a thing to be forgotten.

"Why, look at it! It's as patent as the front tail of an elephant. Adrian Moreton warns his brother James of the Maori plot to kill him. Bertram reads the letter. John White appears on the scene. He makes love to 'The Eichberg' in order that he may become her proxy and get to the meeting. Mr. Bertram resents this trespass upon his preserves, and plans to get even with the Maori. Things could not be more to his liking if he had ordered them for his own special benefit. He does not know that White has any designs upon Moreton, for John White is too old a campaigner to be garrulous—but he knows he is a Maori; that he hates him; that he is to be at the meeting, and that there is a Maori plot against Moreton of which he has already several times taken advantage. What better layout could a chess-master want? He is jealous of White, and White's *presence*, irrespective of his *intentions*, is directly in line with the plan he has so long been pursuing. You remember how he looked when White entered the room at 163? There was no mistaking that sentiment. You see by burying the decapitated dummy in quicklime, so that it should not be recognisable, he calculated in advance, with that wonderful chess-generalship of his, just what would occur. In cutting the head from the make-believe Moreton he prevented the teeth, and the shape of his skull, from exposing his deception, and cast an additional suspicion upon the Maori, White."

"How should the shape of the skull betray anything?" asked the doctor.

"Because the buried man was a negro, a worthless, drunken vagabond, known by the luscious cognomen of 'Persimmons Pete.' If you had ever seen him, you would be sure to remember him. He was over six feet tall; had a limping, shambling gait, which was the result of three factors, namely:—the nervous condition due to his inebriacy; a pronounced case of that bow-leggedness so common to his race, and an inequality in the length of his legs, the right one being some two inches shorter than its mate. His left arm had been broken when a child, and so badly set that he could not straighten it,—in short, he looked, for all the world, like a thing of 'shreds and patches' dropped in the gutter from Nature's remnant-counter. He was found dead in the street and sent to the morgue. Dr. Carew obtained the body, and Bertram must have gotten it from him. He probably told him he wanted it to dissect, though I am fully persuaded that a word from Madame Duval would have secured the cadaver without question, and without explanation."

"Upon my soul, George, you amaze me!" exclaimed the doctor. "The body was buried in quicklime for the same reason, I suppose, that the head was removed, viz., to prevent the immediate discovery of the ruse."

"Exactly," replied his companion briefly.

"Do you know, George," continued Willard, "I feel almost as bad for Carew as I do for Bertram. His case is a tragedy in ethics. Think of it! Because years ago, out of pure kindness of heart, he did an illegal act, he must now be made the unwilling puppet of such a woman as Madame Duval."

"It is indeed dreadful for a man of his superior moral fibre," George replied; "and I sincerely hope Bertram

will break down and confess before we are forced to drag the good doctor into the case. As yet the prisoner has shown no signs of weakening; still we, who know his remarkably keen intelligence, cannot but conclude that he sees the hopelessness of his case quite as clearly as we do. Now, such being the fact, is he going gratuitously to subject 'The Eichberg' and the Madame to what he knows full well is in store for them? I cannot think so."

"I quite agree with you," replied his companion. "By the way, you mustn't forget to be in good season tomorrow night. Suppose you call for me here, and we'll go up to Madame La Salle's together. Can you make it as early as 7:30? The first wedding is to take place at 8:30, and the best men would be considered the worst men if they were late, you know."

"I'll be here at 7:30, Doc," George replied. "Which couple is to be married first, Mrs. Moreton and Eric?"

"No; Miss Sherwood and Elbert, I believe," said Willard. "Did you ever see two finer couples? It makes one sentimental to think of them!"

. . . . . .

The sixth day of Charles Bertram's trial opened with George Maitland still upon the stand.

The witness testified at length to particulars already narrated in regard to the exhuming of the corpse of "Persimmons Pete" from its quicklime-grave in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street. He showed why this make-believe body of James Moreton had been buried in advance, and told all he knew in regard to the disposal of the real body, by consigning it to the waters of the Hudson upon the night of the murder. He detailed fully, link by link, the unanswerable chain of circumstantial evidence making for the conviction that the body taken from the river actually was that of the

murdered man. He even figured out, by the calculus of probabilities, an overwhelming *improbability*—trenching almost upon *impossibility*—that another corpse, so perfectly corresponding to all the known requirements of the murdered man's body, should be disposed of in the same locality, upon the same night, and by persons so like those known to have been present at, and fully believed to be implicated in, the murder. He stated without hesitation that the buried body could not, by any possibility, be that of the murdered man, and told what he had personally seen of "Persimmons Pete's" peculiarities when living.

At this point District Attorney Barton said:

"Considering the time when the body was thrown into the Hudson; its height; its estimated weight; the symmetry and proportion of its limbs; the lines of the jaw-bone, so characteristic in Mr. Moreton; the fine set of teeth; their peculiar shape, and crowded condition in the jaw; the fact that only one had been filled; and the further fact that that one was the third lower left molar, which tooth we know James Moreton had filled, a few months prior to his death, by a dentist who noticed the splendid preservation of his teeth, and who cannot remember that he saw any fillings other than the one he himself inserted;—considering all this, and the further fact that the parties who disposed of this body are given descriptions, one of which closely applies to the prisoner at the bar,—in view, I say, of all this, we may, I think, consider unassailable the conclusion that the body which was dredged from the Hudson River was, indeed, that of the man for whose murder Charles Bertram is now on trial. Inasmuch, however, as this testimony will be rendered even more conclusive,—if such a thing be possible,—by showing that the body buried in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street could not, by any possibility, have

been that of the murdered man, the prosecution has decided to offer evidence upon this subject."

The examination then proceeded as follows:

Q. Who took charge of the contents of the grave in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street?

A. I did.

(The prosecution then exhibited a collection of human bones and other articles taken from the grave.)

Q. Can you tell me what these bones are?

A. Yes, sir; they are the bones of "Persimmons Pete," a negro, exhumed from the grave at 163 Lombrose Street.

Q. Might they not be the bones of James Moreton?

A. No, sir; they are not the bones of a white man.

Q. Explain to us upon what you base these convictions?

(The witness took up the various articles in the exhibit from time to time to illustrate his testimony.)

A. I have here the *femur* and *tibia* of the right leg of the subject. Adjusting these bones in their proper relative relations, you perceive at once that this right leg is bent laterally, or bowed, to a very noticeable degree. Let us take, now, the bones of the left leg. We note a similar lateral curvature, though in this case the curve is not quite so marked. If we consider the bones of both limbs together, we shall at once perceive the cause of this. Here we have them arranged side by side. Placing, now, the head of each *femur* upon this line upon the table, and being careful that its corresponding *tibia* properly articulates with its lower end, let us mark carefully the exact location of the lowest point of the inner *malleolus* of each of these *tibiæ*. If, now, we measure from these points to the line upon which the heads of the *femora* rest, we shall discover that the distance, in the case of the bones of the right leg,

is something over two inches less than in that of those of the left; nor is this variation, in the length of the right and left legs, the result of any difference in their bowing tendency. On the contrary, it is this variation in the length of the bones themselves which makes the bowing tendency slightly asymmetrical.

Q. Whether a string were laid along the bones or drawn taut from the head of each *femur* to the inner *malleolus* of its corresponding *tibia*, the result would be sensibly the same, would it not—that is, it would show the right leg something like two inches shorter than the left?

A. Yes, sir. Let us now examine the left *humerus*. You note here, something less than halfway from the head of the bone to the pulley-like surface which articulates with the *ulna*, a pronounced displacement and enlargement of the shaft of the bone. You see, by its roughened surface, that it is right where the tendon of the *deltoid muscle* was attached. This enlargement could only result from a fracture improperly set, and the nature of this enlargement is such that we can readily see that the break occurred in childhood, though that is quite immaterial to the case in hand. That the general condition of all the bones is that of those of a man past fifty years of age is, however, a fact of the utmost importance.

Q. Have you been able to estimate the height of this skeleton?

A. Within very narrow limits,—yes, sir. There are two methods of estimating the height of a man from his skeleton, viz., the anatomical and the mathematical, and it is always advisable, where possible, to use the one as a check upon the other.—The anatomical method consists simply in putting the bones together; in reproducing, as nearly as possible, the curves of the spine; in

making proper allowance for the soft parts, and in measuring the height. If any part be missing, its size must be estimated and added to the height of the other parts.

The mathematical method consists in multiplying the length of certain bones by a predetermined coefficient. For example: considering the total height as 100, Topinard places the length of the *humerus* at 20, the *radius* at 14.3, *femur* 27.3, and *tibia* 22.1. If, now, we have the length, say, of the *humerus*, we have only to multiply it by 100 and divide by the ratio given—which is 20—to ascertain the height of the skeleton, to which result Topinard advocates the addition of 3.5 ctm. for the soft parts.

Q. Will you give us a concrete illustration of that operation?

A. Yes, sir. We will take the right *humerus*, since that has never been broken. Measuring it, we find its length to be 15.32 inches. Multiplying this by 100, we get 1532 inches, which we divide by 20, getting 76.6 inches for a quotient. To this we add 3.5 ctm. or 1.37 inches, which gives us 77.97 inches,—practically 78 inches,—for the total height of our subject when alive.

Q. Do you mean to say that this man was six and a half feet tall?

A. I mean to say that such would be his height, according to Topinard's method of computation, if he were a *Caucasian*.

Q. Please explain yourself more fully.

A. The African negro is remarkable for length of arm and leg, the Aymara Indian of Peru for shortness. Some negro soldiers, standing at drill, touch the knee-pan. Let an Englishman of average height be placed side by side with an African negro of the same stature, and it will be found that the white arm is two inches

and the white leg one inch shorter than the corresponding limbs of the negro. Now, taking into consideration this important fact, let us repeat our calculation. We have seen that if we are to get correct results from Topinard's ratio of 20 for the *humerus*, we must take into consideration the racial peculiarity of length of arm *if we are dealing with a negro's skeleton.* And the very fact that Topinard's method gives us a man 6 feet 6 inches tall, upon the assumption that he be a *Caucasian*, while the anatomical method shows, beyond any possibility of doubt, that this estimate is far too great, should, I think, prove conclusively that these bones are those of a negro. Allowing that the negro's arm is two inches longer than that of his white brother, let us divide this equally between the upper arm and forearm, which would require us to subtract one inch from this *humerus*. This would give us 14.32 inches for its length, which, by application of Topinard's formula, would yield six feet one inch for the total height of the living man.

Q. How does this agree with the anatomical method?

A. It is in sensible concurrence therewith. We have been obliged, of course, to construct our figure without the head, but I think we may rely upon the results of our anatomical method below the missing part. For this we get 67.13 inches. Now, Sappey gives 13.3 ctm. as the average male height from the front of the *foramen magnum* to the vertex of the skull, and to this we are told we must add 1 ctm. for the space between the top of the spine and the border of the *foramen magnum*, and for the scalp, taken together.

Q. What result does that give you?

A. A total height of six feet and three-quarters of an inch, or within one-quarter inch of the other result by the mathematical method.

Q. Did you check these results in any other way?

A. Yes, sir. Quetelet puts the pubic height at .508 of the total height in man and .498 in woman, while Thomas Dwight gives respectively .514 and .503. Making due allowance for extra length of leg, and taking .511 as the mean between the figures of Quetelet and Dwight, we get for the total height six feet and nine-tenths of an inch, which is highly confirmatory of the accuracy of our results.—I perused, besides the authorities already mentioned, Naegele, Rollet, Manouvrier, Humphry, Hrdlicka, Cunningham, Vierodt and Tylor. They all bore me out.

Q. Have you any other reasons for believing this to be the skeleton of a negro?

A. Yes, sir. I have assembled here the bones of the left foot of the skeleton exhumed from the grave in the rear of 163 Lombrose Street, and I will now place beside it this skeleton foot from the body of a white man. Please compare the two. Here is an anatomical plate of the human foot from the work by Quain and Wilson. What is there about the negroid foot which at once challenges our attention? Is it not the low arch of its instep? Observe the depressed position of the *internal cuneiform* and *scaphoid* bones. What does this signify? It signifies that this exhumed foot belonged to a member of a less highly evolved or inferior race, for the instep of the white man, you observe, is relatively much higher.

Q. Was there anything found in the grave, other than the bones, which leads you to pronounce this a negroid skeleton?

A. Yes, sir; and I would like to state, in this connection, that an article which was *not* found also leads me to the same conclusion. I refer to the subject's head. It was necessary to remove this in order that its

prognathous skull should not at once expose the deception.

Q. Please explain that more fully.

A. A *prognathous* skull is one which has a *gnathic index* above 103 degrees, and a *facial angle* below 80 degrees. The African and Australian are *prognathous*, or "forward-jawed," while the European is *orthognathous*, or "upright-jawed." A low facial angle is due to the ape-like slope of the face of the African and Australian, as distinguished from the nearly upright European face.

The witness then related how he had discovered the hair while cleaning and repairing the skeleton for future use. He testified that he had placed it under a microscope and convinced himself that it had been cut off when the head had been severed from the body. He said that he had regarded this hair of such great evidential value that he had preserved it with the utmost care. He explained that if he had known, at the time he had first discovered it, what he had since learned about the structure of hair, he should at once have perceived that it never came from the head of James Moreton. When asked what evidential importance he had originally attached to it, the witness replied that its colour and "kinky" tendency had gone far to convince him that it had come from the murdered man's head; while the nature of the cut by which it had been severed threw much light upon the condition of the instrument by which the act had been performed, as well as upon the method of its use. The witness had then asked that a hair known to have come from James Moreton's head be taken from Mrs. Moreton's locket and laid beside his exhibit. This request had been complied with, and the jury had satisfied themselves that the two were, as far as they could see, indistinguishable.

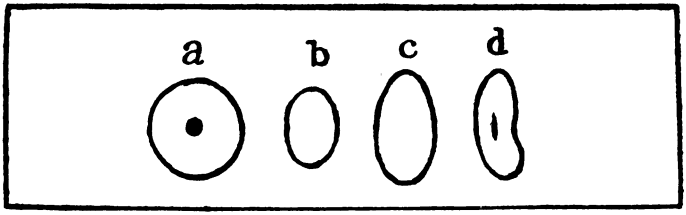
At this point the witness astonished the spectators by a most extraordinary request, the object of which they could not even touch with the intellectual finger-tips of surmise.

"I perceive that Professor Felix Marx is among the spectators," he said. "The gentleman is a German, and I am going to ask him kindly to pull a hair from his head and pass it to the officer, who will please wrap it in this little slip of tissue paper, which I have marked 'G' for identification, and place it there upon the table." When this was accomplished the witness continued:

"I observe at the back of the room a colored gentleman and a Japanese. Will they each kindly oblige me with a single hair?—The officer will please be careful to wrap the hair of the Japanese in the paper marked 'J,' and that of the other gentleman in the paper marked 'N.'"

The spectators were in a fever of curiosity to learn the significance of this extraordinary proceeding. Was this witness a conjurer? and would the three little parcels upon the table straightway metamorphose themselves into canary birds and fly away?

The witness then produced a large sheet of paper upon which was a diagram, of which the following is a much reduced copy:



He asked the jury to scrutinise carefully the four figures thereon, after which the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Please tell us the significance of these figures.

A. They represent the shapes of the cross sections of hairs of four different races, as given by Pruner-Bey. These races are as follows: "a" Japanese; "b" German; "c" African negro; "d" Papuan. We have, in the three slips of paper upon the table, the hair from the head of a Japanese, a German and a negro, while I have here one from the head of James Moreton and one found in the grave containing this skeleton. Let us take this last one first. I will adjust it under the microscope so that each juror may see for himself.

The jurors then examined it carefully, and the witness continued:

You perceive that its section is precisely the shape of that marked "c" in my diagram. Here is a section which I have taken from the hair removed from Mrs. Moreton's locket, and known to have come from the murdered man's head. You observe that its outline is that of the "b" of our diagram, which shows a section of a hair from a member of the Caucasian race. You will please note how impossible it would be to confuse this outline with that of the hair found in the grave. Clearly, then, this latter was not from the head of a Caucasian. Let us see if, quite irrespective of Pruner-Bey's researches, we can show it to have come from a negro. Here is a section of the hair I found in the paper marked "N." You will note that its form is precisely that of the section taken from the hair found in the grave.

The witness then prepared sections of the Japanese and German hairs wrapped in the two remaining papers, and the jurors examined them as they had already examined the others.

Q. How tall was Mr. James Moreton?

A. On the first day of June,—less than two weeks be-

fore his murder,—he was examined for a twenty-five-thousand-dollar insurance policy. The examination papers give his height as five feet eleven.

Q. Would this skeleton measure five feet eleven inches without any allowance for soft parts?

A. Yes, sir, more. The discrepancy between the stature of James Moreton and of "Persimmons Pete" is doubtless one reason why the accused used quicklime.

Q. That is all, Mr. Maitland.

Cross-examination by the defence.

Q. Immediately after the murder of James Moreton at 163 Lombrose Street, this city, on June 13th, you left the room, did you not?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did any one of your associates remain behind with the corpse?

A. No, sir.

Q. Are you sure of that? Might not some one of them have stayed in the room and you not have missed him?

A. That would not have been possible, for after we left the room and locked the door I had each person in the hall sign in a little book I had. At that time I secured all but the names of Bertram, Gates, and Willard, who had been sent from the building to see if they could apprehend the accomplice. Later Dr. Willard returned and signed. Bertram and Gates did not come back.

Q. You are sure Messrs. Gates and Bertram left the building?

A. Yes, sir. Positive.

Q. Is it your belief that the same person or persons who committed the murder, or any of them, secreted the corpse in the wardrobe between the time you left the room and that of the arrival of the medical examiner, and that he or they subsequently removed it?

A. I believe that two persons were concerned in the actual murder, but I do believe that but one entered the wardrobe with the victim's corpse, for the simple reason that that article of furniture is not large enough to secrete the bodies of three men. I feel confident that the accused not only participated in the murder, but that he secreted the corpse in the wardrobe unassisted, between the times stated, and that he subsequently removed the same.

Q. Did he not leave the building with Messrs. Willard and Gates?

A. Yes, sir; but he and Gates almost immediately detached themselves from Willard.

Q. And then you believe Bertram came back and secreted the body?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would he have had time to do so before the arrival of the medical examiner?

A. Yes, sir, ample.

Q. Do you know at what time the medical examiner arrived?

A. Yes, sir; at ten minutes of four.

Q. Might it not have been ten minutes earlier or later?

A. No, sir; not one minute earlier or later.

Q. When did you all go into the hall?

A. Not far from twenty minutes after three,—probably not more than eighteen,—I did not look.

Q. You are sure it was after three?

A. Yes, sir,—positive. The meeting was not called to order till three.

Q. Thank you; that will do.

This was the first occasion upon which the defence had cross-examined a witness, and the jury, no less than the spectators, were entirely at a loss to understand why they had done so in this particular instance, since

they did not attempt to break down so much as a single statement the witness had made.

At this juncture District Attorney Barton said:

"The prosecution rests its case here, secure in the assurance that the Court will allow it to be reopened for the introduction of further evidence, should such action be necessary to the ends of justice."

Mr. Storrow then opened for the defence. He omitted the customary speech, a fact which much displeased the prosecution, since it left them entirely in the dark as to what the defence expected to prove.

Elbert Reiss was the first witness called. He testified to having had a dagger indistinguishable from that which the assassin had used, and admitted that he himself had been suspected on account of this weapon, and had been unable to produce it when called upon to do so.

The sight of this weapon, so like the one which had killed his father, and the discussion of the gruesome details connected with its use, seemed deeply to move Mr. Moreton. It is, indeed, true that Adrian and his brother James were never very companionable; and it is likewise true that the father died before Adrian was old enough to remember anything; but horror often waits for a being to acquire the structure wherewith to shudder,—at all events, it appeared to have done so in this case.

Mr. James Rice was the next witness called for the defence. He testified to being a police officer in Jersey City; that his beat included Lombrose Street, and that he was on duty in that vicinity on the afternoon of the murder. At about twenty-five minutes after three he had heard a woman's cry in the vicinity of Shrove Place. He had hurried in that direction, and had seen a woman and two men, all of them young, engaged in an alterca-

tion. As he had approached, one of the men sprang at the young woman and seized her by the throat. At this juncture he had interfered and taken them all three into custody.

From this point his examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Would you be able to recognise these three persons now, if you were to see them?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Please look about the room and see if any one of them is here!

A. They are all three here.

Q. Will you please point them out?

A. Yes, sir. That young woman yonder.

(The witness indicated Miss Rachel Eichberg.)

This young man over here (pointing to Henry Gates) and the prisoner at the bar!

This last bit of testimony created a profound bit of sensation.

Q. What was done with them upon your arrival at the station?

A. They were carefully examined by Captain Sanderson and subsequently discharged.

Q. Do you know at what time they left the police-station?

A. Yes, sir; it was half-past five.

At this answer a great wave of excitement swept over the court room. Dr. Willard looked keenly at his friend Maitland, but the faint smile upon that gentleman's face calmed his doubts, though it did not inform his judgment. He knew his friend's disposition well enough to feel assured that there was a vast amount of resourcefulness just back of that smile, and he awaited developments with an intensity of interest which he found it difficult to control.

Q. Do you know when you arrived at the station?

A. Yes, sir; twenty-six minutes of four.

Q. Do you know what caused the disturbance?

A. This gentleman here,—Mr. Gates,—stated at the examination that there had been some words between the lady and the accused, over a man named White, of whom he said his friend was very jealous. He stated that the young woman had said something which so excited his friend that it brought on one of his attacks, and rendered him, for the time being, quite unable to control himself. Mr. Bertram was discharged at the young woman's request, and upon his own promise to control himself better in future.

This finished Rice's testimony. The State did not cross-examine.

Captain Sanderson was then called.

He testified that he was in charge of the police-station when Officer Rice made the arrests. He produced his records and fully substantiated every particular of Rice's testimony. He was positive about the time the prisoners reached the station, and the time they were discharged, both being matters of record. He read the entries in his book. The names given were "Rachel Eichberg," "Henry Gates," and "Charles Bertram." He stated that he had no difficulty whatever in identifying each and all of them.

Again the prosecution declined to cross-examine.

At this point the Court adjourned until the following Monday at ten o'clock.

. . . . .

"Have Mr. Maitland and Dr. Willard arrived yet?"

"No; something must have detained them. They will certainly be here soon, however."

It was Miss Sherwood who asked the question and Mrs. Moreton who answered it.

It was their wedding night, and anyone who had seen

them as they sat together in Madame La Salle's parlour would easily have understood what made the hearts of the two men opposite beat so wildly against their ribs. Elbert and Eric pretended to converse, but neither one knew what the other said,—he only knew that opposite him sat an idolised being,—his heaven and his religion!

"Ah! here they are," said Reiss, as the doorbell rang. "I knew they would not fail us."

A moment later Maitland and Willard were shown in. Each did his best to make his manner fit the occasion, but if these four people had not had their powers of observation completely pre-empted, they would at once have perceived that something very serious had occurred.

While Elbert and Marion, who were to be married first, were taking their places, Dr. Willard whispered to Maitland:

"Had we not better call him out now?"

"No, not yet," replied his companion. "Elbert would have no heart to bestow if we did. It will strike him almost as hard as Eric!"

So the two men held their peace till Elbert Reiss and the sweet young lady by his side were pronounced man and wife.

Then Maitland beckoned to Eric, and the two men left the room.

Mrs. Moreton waited patiently for her lover's return, but in his place came Maitland. She glanced inquiringly into his face and then sprang to her feet.

"What has happened?" she cried, unable to suppress her alarm.

Maitland's face was as pale as ashes, and his lips trembled as he replied:

"Eric—Mr. Montrose has been suddenly taken ill—very ill,—he—he begs that the ceremony be postponed till—till his recovery."

"Ill? Eric ill! I will go to him!" and Mrs. Moreton started toward the door.

Maitland gently restrained the anxious woman, as he said:

"Alas, that is impossible! he has left the house."

With a low cry the woman fell, a limp mass, into his arms.

Through the troubled mind of Elbert Reiss rang these words, with the awful, sinister, rasping resonance of the clang of doom: "If the law can't reach him, the lawless can; and I call you gentlemen to witness, now and here, that if James Moreton perpetrate this outrage, I'll put him where he can't repeat it, as sure as my name is Eric Montrose!"

Again and again the terrible threat cried out its hollow jargon deep in the very heart of Reiss's fear, till, unable to endure it longer, he rushed across the room and seized Willard's arm with a grasp that fairly made the doctor wince.

"Speak, man! There is some mystery here, and you can solve it!" he exclaimed close to his friend's ear. "Eric is not sick! I can see it in your face! Tell me! Where is he?"

"He—he has left—the house!" stammered the doctor.

"'Left the house'!" repeated the artist. "What do you mean? Did he go alone? Those officers—I saw across the street—did—did he go with them?"

"I—I cannot answer!" the other replied.

"He did, then; I see it in your face! Oh, my God, this is awful!" And the strong man buried his face in his hands and wept like a child.

CHAPTER VII

Sin is subjective, crime objective. The motive is morally the fact. In the domain of ethics the desire is the act. No law, save only ecclesiastical law, has ever attempted to punish an inchoate thought. Between the wish and its expression, however, there usually is a close family likeness, wherefore it frequently happens, that when the unclean bird of suspicion is looking for a criminal, it settles where it scents a desire, confident that it has smelled out a fact.

"WHEN the defence sprung that incontrovertible alibi upon us," Maitland was saying to Willard as they proceeded from Madame La Salle's to their car, "I was completely 'phased,' as the boys say. Then, like an inspirational flash, I perceived the one little bit of mosaic necessary accurately to position every evidential fact, and to give artistic completeness to this wonderful masterpiece of crime!—There was only one course to pursue, and precious little time to think about that. The very first thing to do was to prevent the ceremony by which Eric Montrose had planned to make Mrs. Moreton his wife. This would save her from the shame, the scorn, the contumely, and the public reproach which she inevitably would have to bear were the marriage consummated."

"But how will all this affect the State's case, George?" asked Willard. "As I understand it, 'Charlie Bert' is the only man at present on trial, and you can't, I suppose, take any action against anyone else in *this* case. Under these circumstances what will you do?"

"As soon as the defence rests, we shall ask permission to reopen and to introduce new evidence," Maitland replied. "Then you may look for sensations; and if we

don't astonish, not only the jury but 'Charlie Bert' as well,—well, I'll never claim to be a seventh daughter of a seventh daughter—that's all!"

"Mrs. Willard has been very uneasy regarding your case," said the doctor, "from the moment the defence proved that 'Charlie Bert' did not go back to 163 and secrete the body. She'll be sure to catechise me pretty sharply, and I suppose you don't want me to say anything of all this even to her."

"No; it is best to keep everything in a bottle for the present," George replied. "It will leak out soon enough,—in a few hours at most. You can appease her fears by assuring her that her good friend Maitland has the case well in hand; that he knows who spilled James Moreton's blood as well as if he had seen him stab him with the dagger; and that since, as they say, 'murder will out,' she will very soon know all about it. This has the advantage, Doc, of being, every word of it, *literally true*, while, at the same time, it doesn't convey a single syllable of information which could cause trouble if it accidently got abroad.—But here's our car, Ned, and we'll have to quit talking 'shop.'"

. . . . .

On Monday morning, long before the opening of the Court, a great crowd of people had assembled, less than a tenth of whom were able to secure admission to the court-room. Mr. Bertram's counsel had given notice that the defence expected to finish its testimony before noon, and there was, therefore, the keenest curiosity to know what Messrs. Plaisted and Storrow expected to do in so short a time against such overwhelming evidence as the State had presented. Most of those who were familiar with such cases confidently asserted that the defence, having secured an admission from the State's

chief witness to the effect that he fully believed that Charles Bertram, having helped to murder James Moreton, returned almost immediately to the scene of his crime and, alone and unassisted, concealed the corpse in the wardrobe,—would probably content itself with the alibi it had already proved in regard to the disposition of the murdered man's body. Others,—and there were many of them,—expected the defence would plead insanity and moral irresponsibility, while not a few thought the accused would confess, rather than suffer his friends to endure the ordeal at which the State had hinted in no uncertain terms. Besides all these, there were still others who believed that Charles Bertram had covered his tracks with such consummate skill that even so clever a man as George Maitland would find himself quite unable to weave any net about him through which, at the proper moment, the slippery clerk would not pass with derisive ease.

An ill-concealed excitement prevailed throughout the room as Mr. Storrow arose to continue his examination of the witnesses for the defence.

His very first words were a surprise, not only to the spectators, but to the jury as well.

"Mr. Elbert Reiss will please take the stand," he said.

The witness replied to a number of questions, a large percentage of which did not seem to have any very immediate bearing upon the case, but to which the prosecution did not object, and then the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Were you not, shortly after the murder of James Eldredge Moreton, arrested and examined in regard thereto and subsequently discharged?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. During that examination were you shown a weapon like this?

(Mr. Storrow took the dagger found at 163 Lombrose Street from among the exhibits, and passed it to the witness).

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you not then testify, in substance, that it was so much like a weapon you had recently used as a model in your work that you would not swear it was not the identical instrument?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were you not then requested to go to your studio and get the weapon you had used as a model? And did you not go, in company with an officer, to search for it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you find it?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was there not another weapon produced at your examination very like yours?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was not mention also made of the existence of a similar weapon in the police archives at Washington?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know of any other weapon like this, besides the two just mentioned?

A. No, sir.

Q. Could either the weapon in the archives at Washington or the one produced by a lady at your examination possibly have been the one which killed James Moreton on June thirteenth?

A. No, sir. The Washington weapon is still there and has never left the police archives. The one found at 163 Lombrose Street was in possession of the authorities at the time when the lady produced a poniard so nearly like it as to be indistinguishable from it.

Q. If, then, one of these three weapons be the one you used for a model, and if one of them inflicted the

wounds which killed James Moreton, which one must it have been?

A. Why—as you put it—it must—it must have been mine,—that is, it couldn't possibly have been either of the other two.

This admission created a profound sensation.

Q. And you cannot swear that it was not yours?

A. No, sir, I cannot.

Q. Did Charles Bertram ever visit your studio?

A. No, sir;—that is, not to my knowledge.

Q. Did Mr. Henry Gates ever visit it?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. Did Mr. Eric Montrose ever visit your studio?

This question fairly electrified the spectators.

A. Why, yes, sir,—often, very often,—in fact he assisted me in the care of it.

Q. Was the weapon you used as a model accessible to Mr. Montrose between the time when you saw it last at your rooms and the time when your search proved it to have disappeared?

The excited spectators leaned forward as if they were but one organism in order that no word of the witness might escape them. Elbert Reiss was very pale and trembled visibly. It seemed to him as if he were about to adjust a noose upon the neck of the man who had been to him more than a brother. He faltered,—his voice broke,—and then he stood mute as if transfixed.

Mr. Storrow repeated the question with insistent emphasis. At length the witness replied in an almost inaudible tone:

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Can you swear that Eric Montrose did not take this weapon from your studio?

A. I cannot believe——

Q. —I'm not asking what you *believe*, but what you

know, and can swear to. Once more! Can you swear that Eric Montrose did not take the weapon from your studio?

A. I—I am—no, sir; I could—not—swear that—he did not.

"That will do," said Mr. Storrow.

Counsel for the prosecution did not cross-examine, but took this occasion to state that they should desire to reopen their case for the introduction of new testimony. To this the Court assented, and the lawyers for the defence promptly put themselves on record as claiming the fullest opportunity to introduce, in rebuttal, whatever evidence they might deem necessary.

The defence then continued its examination.

"Mr. Henry Gates will please take the stand," said Mr. Storrow.

The witness was asked the usual purely formal questions, after which the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. Did you ever see this jack-knife before you saw it at this trial?

(Mr. Storrow passed to the witness the knife which had been used upon the floor-boards at 163 Lombrose Street, as proved by the nicks in its blade.)

A. Yes, sir.

Q. State where you saw it.

A. At 163 Lombrose Street.

This answer created a sensation. The spectators wondered if the witness were about to testify to having actually seen it used upon the floor-boards. The room was as still as the grave as Mr. Storrow continued.

Q. Did you see it in the room where the murder was committed?

A. No, sir.

Q. Where did you see it then?

A. In Mr. Montrose's laboratory.

Q. What do you mean by "Mr. Montrose's laboratory"?

A. There are two laboratories at 163. One is for general company uses, and the other is Mr. Montrose's private laboratory, which he uses for secret experimental work.

Q. And you saw the knife in this private room?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Whereabouts in this room?

A. It was in Mr. Montrose's right hand.

Q. What had he been doing with it?

A. I do not know, sir. I entered the room suddenly. It was open in his hand when I first saw it.

Q. What did he do with it when you entered?

A. He shut it up quickly and put it up on a high shelf among a lot of other things.

Q. Was he nervous or excited?

A. I thought he seemed somewhat nervous.

"That is all, Mr. Gates," said Mr. Storrow.

The prosecution did not cross-examine.

The spectators were in a fever of excitement to know what all this meant. It seemed perfectly clear to them that Mr. Eric Montrose was, in some way, a cardinal factor in Messrs. Plaisted and Storrow's plan of defence. What would be the next move? They were not suffered to remain long in suspense. Mr. Plaisted whispered to Mr. Storrow, and then the latter said:

"Mr. Elbert Reiss will please take the stand again."

Q. Did Mr. James Eldredge Moreton ever, so far as you are aware, ill treat or misuse Mr. Eric Montrose?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did Mr. Montrose know it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he offended at the treatment?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you ever hear him make any threat, or utter any language which could be construed as a threat, in regard to this matter?

The colour left the witness's face, and he hesitated.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Will you please repeat, as nearly as possible, the exact phraseology of this threat.

The witness looked helplessly about him, and he could not have presented a more pitiable spectacle of absolute misery had he been swearing away his own life. It was some little while before he could speak, and then only in a faltering, tremulous aspirate.

A. As nearly as I—can remember—he said: "If the law can't reach him, the—lawless can,—and—I call you gentlemen to witness now and here—that if James Moreton perpetrate this outrage—I'll—put him where he can't repeat it—as sure as my name is—Eric Montrose!"

At this reply many a listener looked knowingly at his neighbour as if to say, "Aha! I thought so!"

The defence continued.

Q. Who were the "gentlemen" referred to?

A. Mr. George Maitland and myself.

Q. *What! Did George Maitland hear that remark?*

A. Yes, sir.

Mr. Storrow looked slowly about the room, shaking his head gravely the while, and then said:

"Indeed, Mr. Reiss, you surprise me! That will do, thank you."

Again the State declined to cross-examine. Then, to the astonishment of every other person in the room,—with the single exception of Mr. Plaisted,—Mr. Storrow said:

"The defence rests here."

Mr. Walter Brooks, an eminent criminal lawyer who

had watched the case day by day with great interest, leaned over and whispered to Osric Shultz.

"Clever fellows, Plaisted and Storrow," he said. "They made no opening speech, so as to keep the prosecution guessing, and now, you see, they are playing to work in most of their best evidence in rebuttal. The State is welcome to every card it can see in their hands."

To this Shultz whispered the following reply:

"I guess you've struck it about right, Brooks. Storrow never was much of a fellow for feeding the opposition. He keeps his tricks well up his sleeve, and if the prosecution hasn't prepared its case, they may be precious sure he won't help them to do it."

While this whispered dialogue was progressing, Messrs. Barton and Maitland and Messrs. Plaisted and Storrow were holding an animated discussion with the Court. The spectators would have given considerable to know what all this was about, but the pleasure was denied them. Then Mr. Storrow went and whispered something to Charles Bertram, who nodded his head in the affirmative as he replied. Mr. Storrow then held a whispered conversation with the Court and the prosecution, after which all returned to their respective places.

Mr. Maitland then arose and said:

"Your Honours and Gentlemen of the Jury: Every nation in the world has, at some time or other, had its ordeals for the detection of guilt. In India all the suspected members of a household were made to take a mouthful of rice, upon the assumption that the guilty one would be unable to swallow it. In England, the *corsnaed*, or trial-slice of consecrated bread and cheese, was used in a similar way, and for the same purpose. You have read in the English legend how Queen Emma walked over the red-hot ploughshares, and if you were

to go to Arabia to-day you would find the ordeal by red-hot iron recognised by law. I need not call your attention to the water ordeal, for you are all familiar with the ducking of old women supposed to be witches,—a survival of a judicial rite forming part of the old Hindu law-book of *Manu*.

"The 'bitter water,' mixed with the dust of the tabernacle floor, mentioned in Numbers; the 'red water of Guinea'; the African *mbundu* root, Calabar bean, and *tangena* nut have all been used as ordeals to determine the innocence or guilt of a suspect. In Burmah, suits are still determined by furnishing each of the contesting parties with a candle exactly equal in size and both lighted at the same moment. He whose candle burns the longest wins his cause.

"I have cited these few cases to show how general has been the belief in various kinds of ordeals. What is the explanation of this wide-spread faith?

"There are, in every human organism, certain processes which are affected by the emotions, quite independent of the will. Just as fear checks the flow of saliva, so do the inner emotions impress themselves upon the circulation of the blood. If, now, we can find some way of observing the changes in the circulation of a criminal, we shall be able, no matter how calm and indifferent he may outwardly appear, accurately to gauge the condition of his internal emotions. Several instruments may be used for this purpose, among them the cardiograph, kymograph, hemadynamometer, sphygmograph, sphygmophone and hematachometer.

"By the use of the sphygmograph M. Voisin exposed a sham epileptic in Paris by showing that his sphygmogram bore no resemblance to that of a true epileptic before and after a fit; and Enrico Ferri refers to a case where the sphygmograph showed that a person accused

of a theft was innocent of that particular theft, but was guilty of another of which he had not even been suspected. He cites also a case where the same instrument established the innocence of a man condemned to death. You will perceive, therefore, that the sphygmograph has already proved its efficiency in the domain of criminology. Charles Bertram is now on trial for the murder of James Eldredge Moreton. It is manifestly impossible to compel him to testify, or to do aught to incriminate himself, yet, notwithstanding this, Bertram has freely,—I might almost say eagerly,—consented to subject himself to a sphygmographic test, and this, Gentlemen of the Jury, with the fullest understanding of what we, the prosecution, expect it to prove. Whatever the outcome, therefore, it must be admitted that the State has neither practised deception nor taken any sort of unfair advantage. What we do we do with the full and free consent of the prisoner, his counsel, and the Court.

"It is our purpose, Gentlemen, to show the effect produced upon the prisoner's circulation by recalling his mind to certain things connected with the deed of which he stands accused. This we shall do by pronouncing certain words in his presence. These words, though they may produce no visible *external* effect, cannot fail to make themselves apparent in the sphygmogram of his circulation. This sphygmogram will appear to you as an undulating black line upon white paper, and it is of the utmost importance in this case that you be able to tell, with absolute accuracy, the precise word to which each portion of this record corresponds.

"For this purpose I have slightly modified the usual construction of the sphygmograph, and combined it with the 'telegraphone,' that wonderful recent invention of Valdemar Poulsen, a Danish engineer. It is the

use of this instrument, requiring as it does a relatively high rotative speed, which causes our sphygmogram to appear as an undulous line, instead of the more usual sharply serrated tracing.

"It will not be necessary for me to minutely describe the Poulsen 'telegraphone.' A few words will explain its cardinal points. The invention is the result of the discovery that it is possible to localise magnetism in a steel plate or wire, by which I mean to state that a thousand different degrees of magnetic intensity may be impressed, say, upon a short section of piano wire, and that this wire will retain them all indefinitely, unless passed through a magnetic field. To record speech, therefore, we have only to pass a magnet along a piece of piano wire, while, by the use of a microphone, induction coil, and source of electricity, we vary the strength of this magnet in exact conformity to the spoken words.

"The problem of reproduction is yet easier. We have only to connect the terminals of the electro-magnet with a telephone receiver, and again pass it along the wire, to secure a faithful reproduction of the voice which made the record. With this explanation I will now offer you a concrete illustration of both the 'telegraphone' and sphygmograph, as I have combined them, for the first time in the history of the world."

Mr. Maitland then took a small instrument from the table and exhibited it to the jury and the Court. The spectators watched his every movement with breathless interest. Never before had they seen the most recent European methods of criminology tested before their very eyes, and to say that they were curious as to the outcome were to convey scarcely more than a hint of the fact. When the instrument was returned to Maitland he continued:

"In this device you doubtless noticed these two inde-

pendent systems of little levers operating these two minute recording pens, and you have perhaps asked yourselves why I should need more than one. I will explain. I have assumed, Gentlemen of the Jury, that most of you are unfamiliar with sphygmographic records, and I have, therefore, placed before you a double instrument in order that you might have, side by side with the sphygmogram of the accused, that of a known innocent person, made at precisely the same moment.

"Let me briefly describe the working of the instrument. This drum is made steadily to revolve by clockwork. You see about its lower half something which looks like a screw thread, but which is in fact a coil of fine piano wire, carefully imbedded in a little groove, turned in a screw-cutting lathe, in order that its convolutions may be kept apart. About the upper end of the drum is wrapped this record-paper, with its double ruling for the two records. This occupies the major portion of the cylinder, because its spiral is coarser, and is in duplicate. These are the pens,—one resting upon each record; and these the levers actuating them. You will note that these levers cause a vibration only in the direction of the axis of the drum, and you will also observe that this pointer, attached to the electro-magnet traversing the piano wire, always perfectly lines with the recording pens, so that we may always see, when we reproduce the vocal record, just what each pen was doing at the precise instant any syllable of that record was spoken.

"In this way, Gentlemen of the Jury, I shall be enabled to put before you a sphygmogram of the accused, side by side with that of an innocent person, and both matched by the words which are responsible for their peculiarities; for, by letting the instrument run a

few seconds before and after I speak the words selected for the test, you will, by comparison, be able to ascertain both the natural personal equation of each subject, and the actual effect produced thereon by my utterance.

"Nothing now remains but to select a second subject, and your first thought most likely will be that it is entirely immaterial who fills this office. This, however, is not quite the case. Were I to select a deaf-mute, or a foreigner unacquainted with our language, you will readily see that much of the value of the test would inevitably be lost. If, now, I could find someone who had absolutely no personal or even humanitarian interest in this affair,—someone, say, whose emotions were no more affected by a murder than the normal man would be by the killing of a mouse,—and were the person to submit to the test, I should expect you, when I exhibited his sphygmogram in comparison with that of the accused, to inform me that I had proved, not that Mr. Bertram's record indicated any *undue excitement* on *his* part, but rather that the sphygmogram supposed to serve as a *standard* evinced a *phenomenal apathy* on the part of the person who made it. Such a position would, under those circumstances, be quite tenable. It behooves us, therefore, most carefully to forestall such an eventuality; and, in order to do this, Gentlemen of the Jury, we must select someone known by you to have both a normal horror of murder and a fair amount of interest in this case. In order that we may, in this test, be not only just but generous to the defence, we have secured for our second subject the man of all men in this room who, as one bereaved by murder, should have the deepest horror thereof, and the profoundest interest in this case,—Mr. Adrian Canova Moreton!"

At this announcement a great wave of excitement swept

through the court room. What an astonishing proceeding! When had a man accused of murder ever before been placed side by side with the brother of his alleged victim in such a test at this. Not a few of the spectators said to themselves that in the selection of Adrian Moreton the prosecution had invited failure, for they felt sure that this highly organised gentleman, thrice unnaturally stricken by the hand of Death, would be certain to be more affected by anything touching his brother's murder than the cool, placid, self-contained prisoner at the bar. Clearly the State had taken a long chance, yet the spectators could not but admire the spirit of fairness which had dictated its course.

Mr. Adrian Moreton and Mr. Charles Bertram then came forward, and Maitland adjusted one of the systems of little levers to each subject.

"Now, Your Honours and Gentlemen of the Jury," he said, when all was in readiness, "I shall start this clockwork, and let the device run for, say, ten seconds before speaking; then I shall repeat what I have to say, after which I shall permit the mechanism to run about ten seconds before stopping it. Now, we are ready. Observe what occurs!" And he set the device in motion. For ten seconds by his watch he remained silent; then he said abruptly to his two subjects:

"James Eldredge Moreton was struck in the left breast with a d—deadly weapon. Whose hand held the da—dastardly implement? Tell me! Who wielded the da—damnable stiletto? Who used that accursed d—dirk?"

During the ten seconds following these words the clock-work buzzed merrily, yet it could not keep pace with the minds of the spectators. To say that they were utterly nonplussed would be to put it mildly. No one doubted for a moment that George Maitland had said

precisely what he had intended to say, and no one had failed to notice the almost burning concentration with which he had watched his subjects while speaking; but neither the conviction nor the observation gave them the slightest hint why he had spoken so strangely, and in such a hesitating manner.

"That will do, gentlemen; thank you," said Maitland, as he stopped the mechanism and relieved his subjects of all connection therewith. "The experiment, I see, has been very successful, and I shall prove by it all that I expected."

The spectators leaned forward excitedly in order that they might lose no word of what followed. Their strained attention, however, was unrewarded, for at this point the Court took a recess.

CHAPTER VIII

It is so easy to do wrong! Everything the Devil makes runs easily. It is only God's machinery which has friction. The lie is spontaneous;—the truth requires thought. Yet the offhand production is born with the seeds of decay in it, and its other name is "Death." Its history is always cyclical, and returns upon itself; for the path of a lie is so tortuous that, sooner or later, it is bound to intersect its own course. Then comes discovery, humiliation, pain—retribution. The hyperbola of deception has never yet been plotted.

THE afternoon session of the Court opened with an attendance larger than that upon any previous occasion during the trial. Not that there were more people in the court room, for that were impossible, since the apartment had been taxed to its utmost capacity almost from the first, but there was a larger number who sought admission and were turned away for lack of room.

The prosecution, to the great disappointment of the spectators, did not immediately return to the sphygmographic test, but recalled Mr. Henry Gates. Mr. George Maitland examined him for the State, the testimony being as follows:

Q. You have exhibited a curious design tattooed into your arm, and have testified that the same figure has been similarly applied to Mr. Bertram's arm. This figure is the Maori hieroglyph which has played so important a part in this case, and you have stated that the accused suggested that you should adorn yourselves with it. Am I not correct in all this?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you consider this figure indelible?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You expect to carry this adornment, then, to the day of your death?

A. Yes, sir. There is no way of removing it.

Q. Among the list of things found in the little closet at 30 Broad Street was the slip of paper with typewriting upon it, which is numbered "10" in my catalogue. The first dozen characters upon this paper are as follows: et&yi)iy)qe%.

By the body of James Moreton, at 163 Lombrose Street, was found another slip of paper containing a cryptogram. This cryptogram has been solved, and by applying its key to the twelve characters I have just read, we get the number "5883." Can you tell me the significance of that number?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did Mr. Bertram ever tell you that he regretted having had this figure tattooed into his arm?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did he say anything about attempting to remove it?

A. He said he would give a good deal if it were off of him,—or words to that effect.

Q. Did he tell you he was going to try to rid himself of it?

A. I do not remember that he did.

Q. Can you swear that he did not?

A. No, sir; I couldn't be certain. He may have told me and I may have forgotten it.

(Counsel for the State then exhibited a volume entitled "Dick's Encyclopedia of Practical Receipts and Processes," and passed the same to the witness.)

Q. Did you ever see that book before?

A. Yes, sir. Either this or one very like it.

Q. Where did you see it?

A. In the room occupied by Mr. Bertram and me in the Johnston Building.

Q. Did you ever see Mr. Bertram consult it?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Are you familiar with the work?

A. No, sir.

Q. If you will open it you will observe that its receipts and processes are consecutively numbered from one to sixty-four hundred and twenty-two, inclusive. Please turn now to No. 5883 and read its heading.

(The witness did as directed and read as follows: "No. 5883. To Remove Tattoo Marks from the Skin.")

Thank you. The slip of paper found in the little fireproof safe contains, then, does it not, a recipe by which Mr. Bertram expected to remove the figure tattooed into his arm?

A. I knew nothing of the existence either of the paper or of the recipe until I saw them at this trial, and know, therefore, nothing whatever of Mr. Bertram's expectations in the matter, further than that he expressed himself as very anxious to be rid of the tattooing.

Q. Where were you on the night of June 13th?

A. I—I was here—here in Jersey City, part of the time.

Q. Were you rooming in Jersey City at that time?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was Mr. Bertram?

A. No, sir.

Q. Was not Mr. Bertram with you?

A. I think quite likely—we were together a good deal about that time.

Q. Don't you *know* that he was with you, and that you went out in a boat together?

This question created a profound sensation. The witness turned deathly pale and his voice trembled as he replied:

A. Yes—I—I do know we were together.

Q. And that you went out in a boat together?

(It was some time before the witness could find his voice.)

A. We—we went out together.

Q. On the Hudson?

A. On the Hudson.

Q. In a boat belonging to Michael Riley?

A. In—in Michael Riley's boat.

Q. You rowed out from the shore, turned up the river a short distance, then proceeded in shore, and took on board a large bundle?

A. Yes—no—that is—I—I decline to state.

Q. On the ground that your answer would incriminate yourself?

A. Y—yes, sir.

The spectators were now at a fever heat of excitement. They had felt sure, but a moment since, that the witness was about to confess to assisting in sinking James Moreton's corpse in the Hudson upon the night of his murder. But now, however, after admitting almost every other detail, he apparently lacked the courage to commit himself to the full truth.

Q. Did not that large bundle contain a man's dead body?

A. I—I decline to answer that.

Q. Will you swear that it did not contain a corpse?

A. N—no, sir. I—I will not swear either way.

Q. Will you swear that Eric Montrose knew the contents of that bundle?

A. No, sir.

(Counsel for the State then passed to the witness the

copy of *The Napier Daily News* which had been placed in evidence during the examination of Mr. Moreton, and called his attention to the conspicuous personal surrounded by the heavy black border.)

Q. Did you ever see that before this trial?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did not Mr. Bertram have that personal inserted?

A. I do not know that he did.

Q. Do you know that he didn't?

A. No, sir; I do not.

Q. You will please examine this.

(Counsel for State passed to the witness a copy of *The Napier Daily News.*)

Compare it, please, with the copy of the same publication just shown you. Satisfy yourself that the date and the edition of the two are identical. Note, further, that there is no variation whatever in the contents of the two, except in the single particular of this personal. Am I correct in all this?

A. Yes, sir; so far as I can see.

Q. Do you find the same personal in each copy?

A. No, sir.

Q. How do you account for it?

A. I cannot account for it.

Q. Could Mr. Bertram explain it to us?

A. I do not know.

Q. What do you think?

A. I—well—perhaps he could.

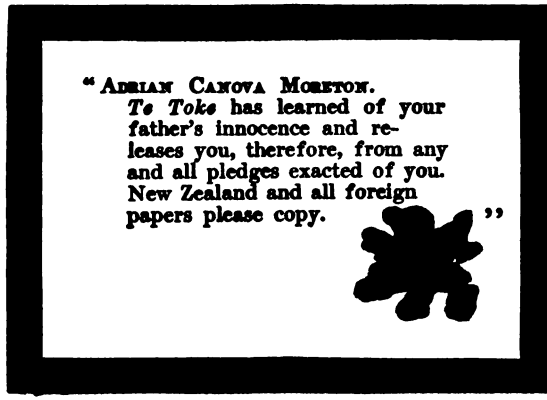
Q. That is all, thank you.

The defence did not cross-examine.

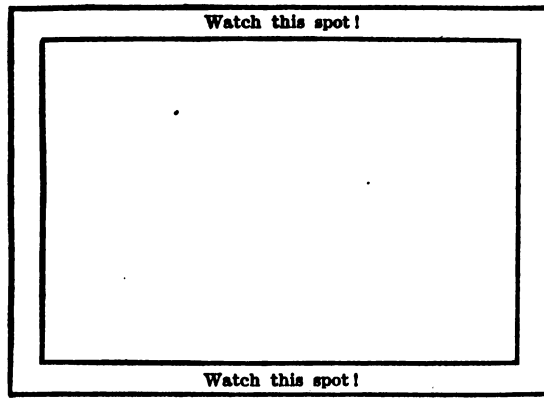
The State then exhibited the two copies of *The Napier Daily News* to the jury. That first put in evidence was marked "No. 1" and that latter introduced "No. 2." Comparison showed absolute identity throughout both papers, with the single exception of

that portion which in "No. 1" was occupied by the personal. Here the divergence was as follows:

No. 1.


"Adrian Canova Moreton.
Te Toke has learned of your father's innocence and releases you, therefore, from any and all pledges exacted of you. New Zealand and all foreign papers please copy."

No. 2.



When the jury had finished examining the papers District Attorney Barton arose and said:

"Mr. George Maitland will please take the stand."

The spectators were all attention. The witness testified that he had sent to Napier, New Zealand, for several copies of this issue of *The Napier Daily News*, with a view to having the personal widely copied in this country and in Europe. He stated that none of the copies he had received contained the personal as in "No. 1," but that all had the blank as in "No. 2." He related how a Maori friend of his, named Tomo, had given him a copy like "No. 1," which he had subjected to photographic and other tests. From this point the examination proceeded as follows:

Q. What was the object of this photographic test?

A. To determine whether or not the personal were printed after the rest of the paper.

Q. Describe your test.

A. I made several. First, I made an analysis of the ink used in the wording of the personal and in its border, and also of that found in the rest of the paper.

Q. What was the result of these analyses?

A. It showed that the ink used in the body of the paper contained oil of tar, burnt cornmeal and linseed oil, while that of the personal and its border contained indigo blue, lampblack and Paris blue, among other ingredients.

Q. What other tests did you make?

A. I removed much of the ink from the heavy border of "No. 1" by a transfer process many times repeated. I then mounted the border upon a plate of glass, and stopped out, with a heavy opaque paint, everything but the border itself. This done, I held the glass between me and the sun.

Q. With what result?

A. I could plainly discern the words, "Watch this spot!" They appeared as black upon a dark grey

ground. I also photo-printed the border with the same result, as you will see by this.

(The witness produced a print, which was handed to the jury.)

Q. And what does this prove?

A. It proves that this issue of *The Napier Daily News*, when published, contained a blank space surrounded by double rulings between which were the words, "Watch this spot!" and that subsequently the personal, as it appears in 'No. 1,' was printed over this area in the copies in which we find it.

Q. That will do, thank you.

The defence did not cross-examine.

The spectators looked as if they were all at their wits' end. They felt sure that Charles Bertram had achieved some signal advantage in perpetrating this clever deception, but, cudgel their brains as they might, they could not even guess what it was; and were forced, much against their wills, it must be acknowledged, to wait until it should please the prosecution to explain.

As Maitland prepared to continue the examination of witnesses, they perceived that the State was in no greater haste than the defence to show its hand.

"Mrs. Elbert Reiss will please take the stand," said Maitland.

At the mention of this name Mr. Moreton started and looked quickly about the room. When he perceived that the lady who responded to the summons was she whom he had vainly tried to win, every drop of blood seemed to leave his face, and for a moment Maitland, who was observing him, feared he would fall from his chair. He bowed his head upon the rail in front of him, and something like suppressed sobs shook his frame. Those near him could not fail to perceive that he was deeply moved—very, very deeply moved. They

thought of the loss of his father, his brother, and his mother; of the terrible ordeals of the trial, so replete with bitter reminiscence; but it never occurred to them that the beautiful young woman just then approaching the witness-stand was the sole cause of the shock that so unnerved him. Had the thought been suggested to them, the majority would have said to themselves; "Adrian Canova Moreton isn't likely to be thinking of *love* at the trial of one of his brother's murderers"—or words to that effect—and straightway would have denied it entertainment. How wide of the mark are ever prone to fly the swift arrows of human judgment!

The spectators recognised the witness as Miss Marion Sherwood, the brilliant young dramatic star, and were themselves much taken aback at hearing her addressed as a married woman, for the wedding at Madame La Salle's had been strictly private, and no one had, as yet, made a confidant of the press.

. . . . .

Omitting the usual formalities, Mrs. Reiss's testimony is as follows:

Q. I have here the weapon with which Mr. Charles Bertram is alleged to have fatally stabbed Mr. James Eldredge Moreton on the thirteenth day of last June. Please examine it closely, and tell me if you ever saw it prior to said thirteenth day of last June.

(Counsel for the prosecution passes the weapon to the witness, who examines it with minute care.)

A. I should say it was the identical instrument I formerly owned. If so, it was in my possession prior to last June.

This answer creates much astonishment among all those who either have not read the particulars of Reiss's arrest or have forgotten them during the intervening months. They remember what the defence has elicited

from Henry Gates and Elbert Reiss. How the former has testified to having seen the jack-knife with the nicked blade in Eric Montrose's right hand; while the latter has been forced to admit, first, that the blood-stained dagger found beside James Moreton's bleeding body is, in all probability, his own; second, that he cannot swear that Eric Montrose did not surreptitiously remove it from his studio, and, third, that both he and Maitland heard Montrose utter a threat against Moreton's life. They feel sure that things will ultimately be made to look very, very dark for the young inventor, but they cannot see what the prosecution expects to gain by bringing the bewitching young actress into the case. In showing that the weapon once belonged to her, the State is certainly not proving its accessibility to Mr. Charles Bertram. Can the prosecution be about to contend that Montrose filched the instrument and gave it to the accused?—They await further developments with breathless interest.

Q. Please state how you came to part with it.

A. I loaned it to Mr. Reiss to use as a model in the picture of Romeo and Juliet which he painted for my manager. Its oddity attracted him, and I accordingly gave it to him as a memento of the incident.

Q. Were you engaged to Mr. Reiss at that time?

A. No, sir.

Q. When were you married to him?

A. On Saturday of last week.

This answer seems completely to unnerve Mr. Moreton. He has, since his painful discovery, remained with bowed head and trembling frame,—like one who means to overtake his fleeing manhood before he shows his face,—and only an occasional quiver of pain or sigh of anguish has recently escaped him. The last reply, however, of the woman he loves and has lost seems to

throw him into a veritable spasm of grief. His sturdy frame trembles like that of a sobbing child which has lost the nothing which is everything to it. His face is hidden and no one sees his tears, yet no one doubts that the salt scald of agony is falling thick and fast. His convulsive efforts at self-mastery are painful to behold, and those whose good breeding amounts to altruism refrain from watching them, knowing that they themselves, in like circumstance, would deeply appreciate a similar kindness. No one guesses, of course, the real cause of this outburst, or suspects, for a moment, that it is influenced by any calamities other than those which the trial, acting like a leaven in the lump of memory, quickens into such awful vividness.

(The witness returns the weapon to the counsel for the State, who places it upon the table among the other exhibits, as he continues the examination.)

Q. Were you present at the studio when Mr. Reiss and the officer searched for the weapon?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was Mr. Montrose there?

A. Not during the search; he came in, however, before I left.

Q. What was the result of that search?

A. The dagger could not be found; it had——

A horribly inhuman, guttural cry drowns the last words of the witness's reply as Mr. Moreton springs to his feet, seizes the dagger from the table and rushes with maniacal fury at Mrs. Reiss. With cat-like agility the victim's husband jumps forward and catches the assailant's arm as the dagger enters the flesh.

With a low cry of fear and pain the woman falls.

The struggle over the weapon is short and terrific, and when it ends both men are upon the floor. Reiss is beside himself with rage, while his antagonist is in a

neurotic frenzy. Both are torn and bleeding. Reiss, however, has suffered far less than Moreton, whose face exhibits several bad contusions, while his coat, vest, and a good portion of his linen shirt have been literally torn from him. Tomo and several others are now able to assist Reiss, and they hold the assailant until the officers reach him.

Dr. Willard bends over the unconscious woman and hastily removes the clothing from the wound. When he reaches the undervest he tears it open and lays bear the breast. His first glance tells him that the dagger struck the third true rib on the left side, and that the wound is slight and not dangerous. The second glance draws from him an involuntary exclamation of surprise.

"Look! The Sign of the Thirteen tattooed——" But he bethinks himself, and instead of continuing his ejaculation, says:

"The weapon struck the third rib, inflicting scarcely more than a flesh wound. It is not in the least dangerous."

The awful tension of anxiety and excitement which has held all spellbound seems, with the great sigh of relief which follows this announcement, to relax a full octave.

"What is the meaning of that?" asks Willard, in an undertone, intended only for Maitland, who is close beside him.

"See! The Sign of the Thirteen!" and he points to a little figure in red tattooed upon the wounded woman's breast.

Tomo, who correctly interprets the gesture, answers the question he does not hear.

"'Marion Sherwood' is only a stage name. She is my grand-niece, Alis Ora Leigh, the only living heir to the estate of the senior James Eldredge Moreton!"

This announcement, which Tomo makes in a loud, clear voice,—as if he were determined all should realise the full purport of his words,—fairly electrifies the spectators, to whom anything relating to the fascinating young actress is of surpassing interest. Before they have time, however, to give a satisfying expression to their astonishment in half-audible exclamations, Mrs. Reiss returns to consciousness, is excused by the Court, and is tenderly led from the room. Her husband looks longingly after her, but does not ask to be excused, since it lacks but a few minutes of the usual time for adjournment. Maitland nods to Tomo, who follows Mrs. Reiss from the room. Then, amid a breathless silence, he addresses the Court as follows:

"Your Honours and Gentlemen of the Jury, this is a most astonishing case. The prisoner at the bar has much for which to answer. He stands accused of the murder of James Eldredge Moreton. Gentlemen! THE HAND WHICH HELD THE WEAPON WHICH PIERCED JAMES MORETON'S FLESH IS IN THIS ROOM—BUT IT IS NOT CHARLES BERTRAM'S HAND!"

The quick, half-sibilant inspiration of the spectators sounds like a mighty gasp of astonishment. Everyone,—judges and jurors no less than the onlookers,—hangs breathlessly upon Maitland's utterance.

"I repeat, Gentlemen," he continued, "Charles Bertram's hand did not hold the weapon which pierced James Moreton's breast! Of this act, at least, the accused is guiltless. Yet, as I have said, the hand guilty of that act is *even now in this room!* To whom does it belong? Look at these two sphygmograms. Note those high, mountain-like peaks in the lower record. Compare them with the gently undulous record of Charles Bertram which, you see, exhibits no turbulence whatever at these points. Just when did these violent,

circulatory disturbances which we find in the lower sphygmogram occur? I will tell you. They occurred whenever I threatened to speak a certain fatal word,—the same word which, inadvertently uttered by Mrs. Reiss, precipitated the maniacal attack you have just witnessed. You will understand, I trust, why I refrain from again speaking that fatal word in this man's presence, and content myself with merely informing you that it is the common name of that murderous implement, there upon the table.—I have asked the question: To whom belongs the hand which held the weapon which pierced James Moreton's breast? and I will now give you the answer.

"It belongs to the impostor who has collected one hundred and six thousand dollars upon James Eldredge Moreton's insurance policies,—the impostor who, after having used every available subterfuge to keep the real Adrian Moreton out of the country, has had the unblushing effrontery to appear in this court room day after day, as the *sole male heir of James Eldredge Moreton!* I refer to that man, there,—that impostor and would-be assassin, who calls himself—'Adrian Canova Moreton'!"

A veritable thunderbolt falling in the centre of the room could scarcely create greater consternation than is produced by this charge, which Maitland hurls into the very face of the man he denounces,—the man vainly struggling, with swollen and distorted face, to tear himself free from the grasp of the officers. When he seems likely to accomplish his purpose, Elbert Reiss springs to their assistance, and the infuriated man is quickly overpowered.

"It's a lie! an infamous lie!" he shrieks, purple with rage. "I *am* Adrian Moreton, the murdered man's brother! Who dares deny it?"

"IN AN INSTANT PANDEMONIUM REIGNS!"

"*I* dare!"

The voice comes from the back of the room near the door.

All eyes turn in that direction, as a bearded man, who has just entered with Tomo, passes quickly down the aisle and confronts the alleged impostor.

"*I*—dare—deny it!" he repeats, fixing him with a narrowed gaze.

The two men are standing close together, and everyone else in the room looks from one to the other in mute amazement. The likeness, even to the last thin line of the facial tattoo, is simply convincing.

At this juncture Maitland turns toward the newcomer and says:

"And who are you?"

"I am that Adrian Canova Moreton, brother of James Eldredge Moreton,—whom this impostor is impersonating!"

"*It's a lie!*" thunders the man who calls himself "Adrian Moreton." "He is the impostor! I am the real——"

But a strange change comes over him, and he leaves his sentence unfinished.

George Maitland completes it for him.

"—YOU ARE THE REAL—THE ONLY—JAMES ELDREDGE MORETON! Officer, serve your warrant!"

"It is false! false! false!"

"Lay bare your breast!" cries Maitland. "If there be not a lozenge-shaped birthmark just over your heart, then, indeed, you are not James Moreton!"

The struggling man, after an almost superhuman effort, manages to say:

"I will—not—gratify——"

"—But I will!" exclaims Elbert Reiss, as, with a single movement of his free hand, he tears away what

little clothing still covers the suspect's breast and exposes to view the birthmark.

An officer approaches with a warrant, but before he can serve it the restrained man is seized with convulsive movements of the face and limbs. His eyes become red, introverted and abnormally brilliant, while a hot, crimson flush suffuses his face, neck and chest. His voice is altered, yet there is a measure of coherency in his utterance. His fury is uncontrollable and his strength prodigious. He hurls the two officers from him as if they were children, disentangles himself from Reiss's grasp, and before anyone can intercept him he seizes the dagger and the left *femur* of "Persimmons Pete" from the table of exhibits, and, wildly brandishing both weapons and uttering horrible imprecations, he rushes furiously upon the spectators!

In an instant pandemonium reigns! Men shout; women faint. Those near the aisle crowd back upon their more fortunate neighbours in frenzied disorder. No one attempts to stop the maniac as he rushes onward, striking viciously to right and left with his weapons, till he has nearly reached the door. At this point the little Japanese in the back row springs nimbly into the aisle and disputes his passage.

The long thigh bone in the left hand of the larger man cuts the air like a flash of light as it swiftly descends toward the smaller man's head. The spectators hold their breath! With the graceful speed of a panther the Japanese catches the descending arm near its elbow in the palm of his right hand as he quickly steps forward, placing his left leg behind the advanced left leg of his assailant. At the same time he passes his left arm under that of his opponent, up around the right side of his neck, and over back to the upper vertebræ of his spine. His right hand, with doubled fist, is adroitly

pressed into the larger man's back, in the vicinity of his left kidney. It is all the work of an instant, and is a pretty a bit of *jiu-jitsuian* "vital-touch" as anyone could wish to see. It renders the maniac perfectly harmless, so far as his ability to injure anyone else is concerned, and, regardless of the solemnity both of place and occasion, the spectators burst into tumultuous applause.

For a moment the captured man strives with demoniacal fury to reach his captor. His face, turgid with blood and swollen with rage, is horrible to look upon; and his awful, half-incoherent imprecations tear the ear and shock the understanding. The officers hurry forward to disarm him, but before they can reach him he hurls the long bone at their heads, and, with a laugh such as shakes with fear the very marrow of Courage, plunges the dagger into his own breast!

A moment later he is a distorted, quivering, uninformed mass upon the floor. Dr. Willard hurries forward and bends over him. Everyone breathlessly awaits the result of his examination. In less than half a minute the doctor rises to his feet and turns toward the judges.

"He is dead!" he says, and bows his head in solemn, deferential awe at the gruesome handiwork of the arch-destroyer of us all.

CHAPTER IX

Intellectual light is the result of a sort of mental incandescence. Its rays proceed outwardly in all directions. It illumines the past, reveals the present, and pierces the reticent gloom of the future. Its warmth fuses together, into a coherent and harmonious mass, consistencies which we thought inconsistent. Only by its empyreal glow can we ever grasp the whole beautifully continuous and subtly graded spectrum of events. Without its penetrative *ex-post-facto* reflection life's chain of affairs is but a pied disorder of detached, broken and meaningless links.

THE unexpected and tragic *dénouement* of the Bertram trial struck the public like a bolt from a clear sky. The strokes of doom, when they catch a guilty conscience off its guard, do not produce a profounder or more fundamental psychic disturbance.

The press scare-headed the strange case in all its multifarious phases; and immediately George Maitland came to be regarded as a detective possessed of some marvellous, if not, indeed, ultra-mundane, power.

To all this flattery and adulation George turned the dead ear of modesty. He had, moreover, the best of reasons for keeping much that he knew an inviolable secret,—a secret not to be confided to any but those *alter egos* on whom he built an absolute trust. Had he told all that he had learned, it would have caused a deal of pain and trouble in more that one quarter; for which reason he permitted the public gravely to underestimate his mastery of the case.

. . . . .

"I understand, of course, the main points of this singular case, but there are a great many details which I find myself unable to comprehend, and I am entirely at a

loss to see how you succeeded in mastering them," said the doctor that night in Maitland's rooms.

"Your difficulty is quite natural, under the circumstances," Maitland replied, "for this whole affair is somewhat intricate, and I have by no means shed upon you all the light which illumined my own pathway. I think I can make everything quite plain to you, if you will let me begin at the beginning and go briefly over the whole affair.—In the first place, not a little of the testimony elicited by the State during the latter part of 'Charlie Bert's' trial was for the express purpose of enabling us to observe its effect upon Mr. Moreton.

"Let us begin with the personal equation: James Moreton inherited his mother's epileptic neurosis, with the addition,—as is so frequently the case,—of a strong, almost overwhelming predisposition to insanity. I need not, I trust, tell a physician that children of insane or epileptic parents are ever prone to exhibit a congenital deficiency, or absence of moral sense, which may or may not be accompanied by a corresponding intellectual deficiency. In the case of James Moreton the mind was abnormally active and acute.

"As we look back over his life, we note again and again unmistakable symptoms of *mania transitoria* and the *folie circulaire*, merging, ever and anon, into other types of mania. Not only was he marked with a dagger-wound, but even the word 'dagger' threw him into the most violent excitement. This excitement he was able to subdue when he had full, normal control of all his faculties,—but when it superimposed itself upon the agitation following other grave psychic disturbances, it swept him beyond himself, and made him, for the nonce, a dangerous maniac. Four times have I heard the word 'dagger' spoken in James Moreton's presence, first, at Miss Sherwood's debut; second, at the little

supper which immediately followed it; third, when Moreton showed me the newspaper-cut of the weapon which had killed his father; and, fourth, this very afternoon just prior to his assault upon Mrs. Reiss. My use of the sphygmograph was merely for the purpose of demonstrating, beyond a doubt, the effect produced by a series of threats to speak this fatal word."

"Good! that answers one of my questions!" interjected the doctor.

Maitland continued as if he had not heard him.

"Moreton lacked physical sensibility, was accordingly cruel, and had a good dash of that genius whose fierce fires so frequently blaze on Epilepsy's hearth. His initiative was marvellous, his persistency tireless. The soubriquet 'Dog' was descriptive rather than appellative. His periods of alternate depression and exaltation are accounted for by the *folie circulaire* which afflicted him, as are also his insufferable conceit and his insatiate thirst for excitement. He had few desires, but those few encompassed his whole being, and he pursued them with the relentlessness of fate. So much for the personal equation. Can you hold the picture?"

"I certainly ought to, it's vivid enough," replied the doctor.

"I'd make it more so, Doc, if I knew how, for it's the crux of the whole case," Maitland replied. "Now, hang on to it, and take long steps, while we go through the thing with a 'hop, skip and a leap.' Moreton's acts were *primarily* caused by his mania. Don't let subsidiary motives blind you to that fact. Life had become an unendurable bore to him. He felt that he would cease to be unless he could gratify his craving for excitement; and no ordinary or legitimate thing could quicken his dull palate. Lord Byron got so cayenne pepper seemed insipid to him. James Moreton

and the confused hell of the Stock Exchange tame and nerveless. He determined to play the only game which was desperate enough to interest him, and sent for me, —if you will pardon me for throwing a small *boutonnière* at myself,—in the belief that I would help him keep up the interest. You see I had gained a little notoriety through the Darrow case, and you know the alienated mind is peculiarly sensitive to popular feeling. He began sending threatening letters to himself, and, having been warned by his brother of the Mohakaka plot, he used the Sign of the Thirteen wherever he could, and lost no opportunity to give the whole affair a Maori atmosphere."

"And that is the explanation of the assault in the snowstorm?" asked the doctor.

"Yes," replied the other. "I had recently tried to allay what I thought to be his fears, and he got up that little demonstration just to get me into the proper atmosphere, as it were. The second assault,—the one in which his assailant was alleged to have taken refuge in Madame La Salle's house,—was just a dainty bit of romancing."

"But, George," Ned objected, "suppose you had gone to Mrs. Moreton to verify the tale and she had told you he had not been there?"

"But, you see, I did go to her and learned that he *had* been there," George replied. "He only drew upon his imagination in the matter of the assailant. All the rest of it transpired precisely as he related. James Eldredge was *crazy*, Doc, not *foolish!*

"And now we approach June thirteenth. The robbery which Moreton described to Gates as occurring while he lay upon his office sofa was another romance for the purpose of creating a Sign-of-the-Thirteen atmosphere, and Gates was pledged to secrecy, for reasons

which will be perfectly obvious to you. At the stockholders' meeting Moreton intended to create an altercation, and would probably have done so by an unfair counting of votes had not the White affair offered a better opportunity. When the lights went out Moreton stabbed himself."

"But, George, that's impossible!" exclaimed the doctor.

"It's true, nevertheless!" retorted his companion, laying a little slab of cork with a small hole in its centre upon the table. "It was a pretty trick, and I'll explain it to you, but you must never divulge a word of what I tell you. It might do your fellow-craftsman, Carew, an incalculable harm,—a harm against which I fully guaranteed him when he confessed to me one or two little details of which I was not quite sure."

"Indeed, George, you astonish me!" exclaimed the doctor.

"Now, listen!" said Maitland. "We thought the Madame had made capital out of Carew's past when, in reality, it was James Eldredge himself who had performed that pleasant function, and had dragooned the good doctor into utter subserviency to his own will. There was a good, generous bit of hypnotism mixed up with it, too, though to this day Carew has remained in ignorance of that fact."

"But how did Moreton get out of 163?" Willard asked.

"Why, Doc," George replied, "you surely know that without my telling you. He did for himself just what we thought 'Charlie Bert' did for him. There was the trick-cabinet; all he had to do was to use it.—In short, Ned, the most remarkable thing about this whole case is that almost everything having any criminal significance which can be predicated of 'Charlie Bert'

is equally true of James Moreton, and *vice versa.* You see, the whole trouble was with our major premise, which was: 'James Eldredge Moreton has been murdered.' Now, I contend that if that postulate were a true statement of fact, my conclusion, to wit:—'Charles Bertram was the principal assassin,'—would be unassailable. 'Charlie' has simply no psychological *right* to be innocent. His very *innocence* is a matter of *guilt.* Now, it was Moreton himself who buried 'Persimmons Pete,' and who, with the assistance of our two Jersey City assailants, robbed his own safe, burning a hole through it, despite the fact that he knew its combination, in order that the robbery might seem the work of others. He buried 'Persimmons Pete' in quicklime, so that the negro's body might pass for his own and he thus be enabled to collect his insurance money, which he did, while personating his brother Adrian, to the tune of a hundred and six thousand dollars. It was this little irregularity for which the officer was about to arrest him this afternoon when prevented by his frenzied escape."

"But how about the body in the Hudson, George? I thought you were positive Gates and Bertram consigned that to its watery grave on the very night of June thirteenth," said Willard, in evident perplexity.

"Oh, Doc, this is a great case! We had a coincidence or two in the Darrow enigma, but nothing like this. You see, it was this way: 'Spike Dennis' and 'Cogan, the Jag,' who have just confessed to robbing upwards of a thousand graves, had been doing quite a thrifty bit of business in cadavers. 'Charlie Bert' was one of their very best customers. Some time before light on the morning of June thirteenth a body was left for Bertram in a little deserted shanty not far from 163 Lombrose Street. Thither he and Gates intended to

repair after the meeting, in order that Charlie might secretly dissect his purchase while Gates stood guard outside.

"Well, to make a long story short, before Charlie could even unwrap his purchase, Dennis paid him a hurried visit, and informed him, to use his own vernacular, dat de cops wuz onter de hull biz, and if dey didn't be afther makin' thracks wid de stiff, de peelers would make zebras o' de hull bunch.—This was enough for Bertram and Gates. They lost no time in removing the cadaver to another hiding-place, where it could safely remain for at least an hour or two while they were procuring means to transport it to the river-bank."

"No wonder Gates was afraid to answer your questions!" exclaimed the doctor. "And no wonder his fear misled us all! But how about 'Persimmons Pete'? Did you not tell me you knew just where Bertram procured this body?"

"I told you that Dr. Carew secured the cadaver, and that 'Charlie Bert' must have obtained it from him," George replied. "Now, for 'Charlie Bert' read 'James Moreton,' and the whole thing is Gospel.—Moreton used the cryptogram partly because it would add very materially to the mystery and the Sign-of-the-Thirteen atmosphere with which he desired to enshroud everything, but chiefly because it would enable him to prove his own demise to the satisfaction of the insurance companies, and of Mrs. Haswell's attorney, Mr. Tuttle. He arranged with Madame Duval to write us, and furnished her with the correct location of the buried body, in order that she might give it to us.

"Moreton and the Madame understood each other capitally. At the earliest possible moment he left for New Zealand. In order for his plans to reach a successful conclusion, it was necessary that he should im-

personate his brother Adrian, who was named in all his insurance policies as his beneficiary. It was arranged that Dr. Carew should break the news to Adrian by *letter*,—by wire would have been much too quick,—after delaying a sufficient time to enable James to get upon the ground and get things fixed."

"Why, what had he to get fixed, George?"

"Good gracious, Doc!" exclaimed his companion, "is it posssible that you have not yet perceived that all Adrian's New Zealand troubles were deliberately planned by James, and executed by Maoris in his pay?"

"For heaven's sake, George! You don't mean that James Moreton secured control of *Te Toke*, do you?" Ned gasped.

"More than that, Doc!" Maitland replied. "There never *was* any *Te Toke* society outside of James Moreton's fertile imagination. It was all a plan on his part to terrorise Adrian, and to prevent him from disclosing his identity in a way that would jeopardise the success of the elaborate fraud James was perpetrating. It would have been very inconvenient, to say the least, had the real Adrian shown up in this city just as the false Adrian was collecting the insurance money. To prevent this, James devised the whole *Te Toke* swindle, and subjected his brother to the grossest cruelty, besides disfiguring him for life."

"But he had his own face tattooed, George," said the doctor.

"What of that?" replied the other. "He had little or no sensibility to pain, and as for his own disfigurement, he meant, as we have seen, to get rid of all that in good time. He wanted to make sure that Adrian wouldn't dare come to New York, *even under an assumed name*, so he branded him with as little compunction as a ranchman would exhibit in branding a steer."

"But I don't see, George, why he published the *Te Toke* personal if he wanted to keep Adrian away," objected the doctor.

"You forget, Ned, that his publication was *very limited*, consisting of but two copies, one for himself and one for Tomo, their purpose being to explain how it happened that he came back to New York after his supposed solemn oath to the contrary," Maitland replied. "It was *our* publication which undid him and brought the real Adrian back. He didn't *really* publish it for fear Adrian might see it, and, acting upon it, do the very thing of all things he most dreaded,—so he published the 'watch-this-spot' ad. instead.

"As soon as Adrian was safely disposed of, he hurried back here. Just how he 'pierced' my New Zealand disguise and learned, moreover, that Tomo was returning with me, I don't happen to know. He sent the 'cooked up' personal, I suppose, before leaving, or arranged to have it sent later. He pretended illness upon Tomo's first visit in order to prevent the Maori from questioning him upon matters which might expose his deception. One of the cleverest things in this whole masterly fraud is the way in which James Moreton utterly submerged his own hateful personality in the lovable character of his brother Adrian. It was as rare a bit of acting as I've seen for many a day, and explains what has heretofore always been a great mystery to me, viz., how on earth he ever succeeded in winning such a woman as Mrs. Hortense Marie Merriam."

"And so Dr. Carew was privy to the whole affair?"

His companion did not reply directly to his question.

"James Moreton's body, when examined, exhibited two wounds. That in the back was prepared in advance by Dr. Carew, and was merely a painted imitation, assisted by a slight, shallow cut in the flesh. The wound

in the breast was also very shallow, and was made by a specially designed, telescoping trick-dagger, the blade of which, upon release of a secret detent, slipped upwardly into the handle to within less than an inch of its point. This cork-pad here was in Moreton's pocket just over his heart. He placed the point of the dagger against it, released the detent, and pressed vigorously. The weapon pricked through the cork-pad just enough to make a slight flesh wound, in which condition it was held upright by the pad and looked for all the world as if buried to the hilt in the prostrate man's heart. All that was necessary was to make sure that Dr. Carew, who knew the dagger's secrets, should extract the weapon and examine the victim. This was easily arranged. By releasing the blade while removing the dagger the effect was precisely that of withdrawing its full length from the wound. You perhaps noticed how Carew started when you told him you were a doctor and offered to assist him. He was afraid your professional eye would discover the whole clever trick."

"But his protest, George, at Moreton's treatment of White!"

"Acting—just natural acting," Maitland replied. "You see, the good doctor spoke precisely as he felt, and—and would have *acted* had he been free. The sentiment itself was perfectly spontaneous and honest, and was, therefore, extremely convincing.—The vest and this bit of cork were accidentally left behind, but the telescope dagger was removed and Romeo's dagger left in its place.

"At the time, of course, I had not the faintest shadow of a doubt that Moreton had actually been murdered, for which reason this little cork-pad possessed no significance whatever for me. The small size of the hole in the vest ought to have aroused my suspicion, but, I

am ashamed to say, it didn't. I thought the dagger probably cut the cloth but little and stretched it much, and dropped the matter without subjecting it to actual test, for which I richly deserve a thorough berating.—Just after Moreton's assault upon Reiss, which you will remember, I left the room to get him a glass of water. Then it was, doubtless, that he filched Romeo's dagger."

"What became of all the money which was in the safe?"

"I think James Eldredge probably buried it somewhere, intending to dig it up later, after the whole affair had blown over, and he could permanently leave these parts without exciting suspicion. If so, there's a rich haul in store for whoever finds it."

"Well, I should say so! More than four hundred thousand dollars! My! I've half a mind to go out and buy a shovel, myself!"

"If this loss should ever leak out, Ned, New York won't be big enough to hold the Captain-Kid cranks who'll stampede hitherward. Isn't it a pity, though, that James Eldredge couldn't have lived long enough to have told where he hid that money? He never invested it, for he was a deal too clever and farsighted to put his ill-gotten gains in any place where his right to them might be questioned should anything go amiss. Mark my word! if that money be ever found, it will be discovered in some place where James Eldredge believed it could safely remain for a hundred years,—and where, furthermore, he could, if occasion required it, put his hand upon it at a minute's notice."

"By the way, George, you haven't told me yet why Moreton made 'way with that second will."

"To cast suspicion upon his wife, and further complicate the interest of his little game. What he could get out of the safe, and out of the insurance companies,

was all he was playing for; and if his wife had permitted the first will to be administered, it wouldn't have worried him any. You see, Doc, his mind was alienated, and his ethical nature perverted. You, of course, know that insane persons may, outside of their maniacal orbit, be affected by precisely the same motives, the same hopes and fears, loves and hatreds, which influence the healthy mind. James Moreton's master-craving was for criminal excitement. Scarcely second to this was his infatuation for Miss Sherwood, or, to be exact, Miss Alis Ora Leigh. Incidentally, he wanted to implicate Reiss, so as to prejudice the artist's suit in the same quarter; to cast suspicion upon, and to get rid of his wife; to escape the legitimate results of the Haswell indebtedness; to save what money he had; to get still more from the insurance companies; and to have yet another opportunity, in the assumed character of his brother, to press his suit with the actress. You will understand, of course, that all these factors were not considerations from the start, several of them being mere after incentives to a man who needed no further prodding."

"And 'Charlie Bert's' jack-knife, George?" asked the doctor.

"It wasn't his, Ned. It belonged to Moreton, and Charlie simply appropriated it after his employer's supposed murder. After all the knife testimony was in, I succeeded in finding the fellow who sold it to Moreton. I tell you what, Doc, after all's said and done, it's the *unique and startling parallelism* existing between the cases of Moreton and Bertram which astonishes me most of all.—But there! I'm glad it's all over, Ned, and that it has turned out so well. From the moment I realised that upon me would devolve the thankless task of preventing Mrs. Moreton from innocently becoming a bigamist, to the instant you pro-

nounced James Moreton dead, I did not draw a comfortable breath. I dared not tell Mrs. Moreton the real facts or permit Eric to do so. It was awful to separate them right at the altar, but there was no help for it. Had the faintest suspicion that all was not progressing to his liking reached the gentleman who called himself 'Adrian Moreton,' he would promptly have shaken the germ-laden dust of this great metropolis from his feet and left your friend Maitland in a very awkward position. Even a look, wholly unconscious, on Mrs. Moreton's part, as she met him in the court room, might have sufficed to do the trick. No, sir! I knew too well the seer-like astuteness of the man with whom I had to deal to be taking any such long chances."

Dr. Willard seized his companion's hand and shook it warmly as he said:

"Well, George, you played great chess, and I congratulate you on your brilliant checkmate!"

"Don't you think, Doc, that '*stalemate*' is a bit nearer the fact, since I am to have my labour for my pains?" asked Maitland, with a quizzical expression upon his face; and then continued: "The ending of this case is paradoxical, like all the rest of it,—a drawn game where nothing is *drawn!*"

CHAPTER X

The circle is the emblem of eternity; the spiral the symbol of evolution. Nature, like History, sings a roundelay. Unconscious, our little egoistic bubble is segregated from the great ocean of the Unknown, and, unconscious, is it pricked back into it at the last. In the interim, it is prone to forget its fathomless, infinite parent-fluid. Existence forces upon us the orbital habit, and indelibly dyes each human skein with the nostalgic longing to go to sleep near the place of its first awakening,—to make its grave in the vicinity of its cradle. Art, which is but Nature informed and impassioned, similarly rounds out each presentment by *rounding* its course. Only thus is the circle completed, and only thus is the new creation psychologically differentiated from the great experiential ocean which gave it birth,—a fragile, myriad-tinted, iridescent bubble of the soul! True literature measures a history, as science measures a wave,—from any chosen phase to its cyclical repetition.

THE declining sun lights the beautiful cone of Mount Egmont with a tender, roseate blush, in which gleam jewels of many hues, burning themselves into prominence through a tiara of flesh-coloured enamel. Below the broad band of light is an ineffably subtle green-blue haze, milkily iridescent, and shimmering with the hot pulse of opalescent fires. Nearer yet, where the magnificent pile takes its first upward leap, is a riband of deeper dye selvaged, on the thither side, by a thin, golden stripe. From this flashing yellow band luxuriant Nature, like a carpet-salesman justly proud of his wares, rolls to our very feet her wondrous, parti-coloured web of pink and white and red. It is blossom-time, and paradisiacal sprites have untied and flaunted wide open to the mellow, perfume-laden breeze every magical jewel-bud of colour which Spring,—dear Mother of Life!—so deftly and so tenderly hides in the warm, green bezels of New Zealand's flowering trees.

The invigorating air, kind to Kant's mistake, goes, in good sooth, more to the head than to the lungs. At all events, such is the effect its balmy, odorous and ambrosial seduction seems to produce upon the little gathering seated about a picnic repast spread beneath the towering *totara* tree, if one may judge by the bubbling mirth which ripples thence upon the calm of evening.

There are five couples and an extra lady. A little to one side of the great mahogany-pine, or *totara* tree, under which the party sits is an easel supporting a large canvas which New York devotees of art will soon be admiring in a Fifth Avenue gallery. The artist, just at this moment, is doing hungry justice to a chicken sandwich, as he says:

"If ever you want a recommendation as a cook, Mrs. Moreton, just refer to me."

A handsome, dark-skinned woman, with a princess's mien and a wonderful head of glistening, silken hair smiles pleasantly as she replies:

"I suspect the greater part of the credit is due to Taranaki's marvellous atmosphere and the irresistible sauce of appetite which it pours over my humble offerings."

"I assure you, Lenore dear," says the artist's wife, "that you have no occasion for such modesty."

Lenore's husband, a fine-looking man with a delicately traced facial tattoo, gazes proudly at his handsome wife.

"We are all in Taranaki now, and we must learn to call Mrs. Moreton by her real name, or her Maori friends will not know her. Neither 'Lenore' nor 'Mrs. Moreton' means anything whatever to them. They know my wife only as 'Tarore,' Ta Pura's charming daughter. Lucia can testify to that."

The sweet-faced middle-aged lady referred to relates

how, only yesterday, she had asked one of Tarore's friends where Lenore had gone, and had been unable to elicit any reply to her question other than "*No hea! No hea!*"

"You really can't complain, Lucia, my dear," laughs Mrs. Montrose, "for I am sure whenever you address Tarore as 'Mrs. Moreton' you get a prompt response from me. Just think of it, my husband here asked me only the other day, if I were ashamed of the name of Montrose!"

"I shall have to take Eric apart and reason with him in pieces," said Maitland jocosely, "if that's the way he's talking to you before your honeymoon is over. If ten of us can't keep him in better subjection than that, what *would* he have been if we hadn't come along? Of course, the rest of us expect you newly married couples fully to realise that we took this long trip halfway around the world not because we needed an outing, or wished to see New Zealand, but simply for the purpose of chaperoning turtle-doves who were too young to fly so far alone."

And so the merry party rambles on, like school children at a holiday picnic. Dr. and Mrs. Willard and Mr. and Mrs. Maitland have been wedded a number of years, but for all that appearances would indicate to the contrary, the whole five couples might have been married yesterday.

The "odd" woman, Lucia Moreton, Adrian's sister, is, paradoxically, the most even of them all, her whole manner being characterised by a sweet and serene contentment,—a high plateau of well-being with no ambitious sky-aspiring peaks, and no deep, dark, abysmal valleys. Between her and Mrs. Reiss there is a love like unto that existing between mother and daughter.

The generosity of the younger woman,—the only

legitimate living heir to the estate of the elder James Moreton,—in refusing to benefit in any way whatsoever by her newly discovered relationship, moved Lucia deeply, and from that time on they grew closer and closer together as the weeks went by, till now they are more to each other than even they themselves can realise.

While all are still partaking of refreshment, an old gentleman, very tall and active, is seen approaching with prodigious strides.

"Look! Here comes Tomo, spacing off the country like a pair of huge dividers!" exclaims Maitland. "He's got some important news—I know by his gait. I thought it strange when he disappeared last week without a word of explanation. Now we shall know what he's been up to."

In a few minutes, Tomo, with happiness inscribed all over his *mokoed* countenance, is seated in the midst of the little party. He is half famished, but he will eat nothing until he has told his news.

"My people are an honest people!" he begins, raising his arms and spreading out his hands, as his chest swells with pride. "Their accounts are made to balance. They walk in the path of light, and where the foot slips the step is retraced. I am come from the pah of the Mohakakas, from the *Runanga* of my people!" with which exclamation Tomo, unable longer to remain seated, springs from the ground and rushes to and fro, gesticulating as he speaks, after the manner of his people.

"They would talk with thee, O my master!" he continues. "They would repair, as far as may be, the wrong done thee and thine! They have lands to give thee, and forgiveness to crave! Thou shalt go to them, and plead thy cause! Thou shalt see how sorrow-bitten they are! Thou shalt find them as generous as the harvest-moon; as

just as the measure of the seasons; as considerate as a ewe-sheep for its new-born lamb! Thou shalt have but to speak to see before thee the open hand! Go to them, O my master! and help them to bind with the balm of healing the gaping wound of the past!"

As the old Maori finishes Adrian says:

"Deeply do I appreciate, Tomo, both your kindness and the spirit of justice which actuates your people. Say to the *Runanga* that my sister Lucia and I cherish no bitterness against the Mohakakas for the awful mistake they made. Oraka, the guilty *tohunga*, has been punished, and we are content. Thank them for their kind offer to make pecuniary restitution. We appreciate it deeply, but cannot accept of it, so far as we are concerned. We are not legally our father's heirs, and can have no valid claim against your people on his account. However, be that as it may, we ask for nothing—and will accept nothing. Say to them that my wife, my sister, and I have come to make our home in their beautiful New Zealand, in order that we may escape the insufferable greed which, like the heavy shadow of a Titanic vulture, plunges my native land in gloom. The unholy passion for dollars has done the Moreton family quite harm enough already. I have sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; I want no more. Thank your *Runanga*, Tomo, and tell them this for me."

The old Maori is somewhat crestfallen, for the moment, and Maitland hastens to divert his attention.

"With enough to 'keep the wolf from the door,' Tomo; a climate fit for the gods; scenery good enough for—for their wives; and a government admirably suited to—to their children,—what more can a man want?" asks George earnestly.

"What more but love?" says Mrs. Reiss and Mrs. Montrose almost in a breath.

"Ay, truly! what more but love?" ejaculates Maitland, with fervour. "I give you a toast!" he continues: "To the Queen of Hearts; the daughter of Tenderness; the mother of Love, and Heaven *itself*—woman! May she tarry ever with us, and tightly clasp our hand as we pass into the long shadow of the Retrospect!"

GLOSSARY

Since several Maori words and expressions occur in this work, the subjoined glossary is given, explaining the principal ones.

AROHA.....Love and sorrow in one word.

BIRDMOON.....November.

KAHAWAI .....A tender-mouthed fish much prized by the Maoris.

KAKAPO.....A nocturnal, flightless New Zealand parrot, called also "owl-parrot" and "night-kaka."

KARAKIA.....An incantation.

KAW-SHORE.....A native bier on which the Maoris carry their sick and wounded.

KIA KOTAHI KI TE AO! KIA KOTAHI KI TE AO! KIA KOTAHI KI TE PO! A literal English translation would not convey the proper meaning. By these words, supposed to possess a certain mystical significance, the dying Maori is conjured to cling to life.

KI AU TE MATAIKA! .....—"I have the mataika!"—The first man killed in a battle was called the "mataika."

KINAKI .....A relish.

KOHORU .....An act of treachery or murder.

LITTLE BIG-GUNS .. ..Cannon.

MACORO.....The wood demon.

MANA ..... Power, prestige, luck, authority, etc. The word has a wide range of significance.

MOKO ..... Facial tattoo.

NA! NA! MATE RAWA! The battle cry by which a warrior exultingly and tauntingly proclaims the death of an enemy.

NO HEA ..... Literally, *from whence.* Often used in the sense of *is not,—does not exist.*

PAURA MAMAE ..... It is a native custom, when any chief of importance has been killed in *fair* fight, for his friends to form a party and enter even the enemy's country, should he have fallen there, and fire some volleys in his honour on the spot where he fell. This they call *paura mamae*—powder of pain or grief.

PIHE ..... A funeral chant.

PIKAU ..... A back-load. Only slaves or persons of no account bore burdens.

PUREKI ..... The *pureki*, two of which were usually worn, the one around the waist and the other over the shoulders, was not inappropriately called "a mat" by the first white men who visited the island. It was a rough garment of coarse texture.

RANGATIRA ..... Chief; gentleman; warrior.

RUNANGA ..... The tribal council, consisting of the ruling chief, some of his nearest [illegible] the war chief of the tribe, and [illegible] its greatest and most distinguished [illegible] as the council might invite to [illegible]

SEA-BIRDS ..... The white man's ships.

TANGI ..... A dirge or song of lamentation for dead. To *tangi*—to weep.

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